

# **Mid-Term Evaluation of the Community Based Biodiversity Conservation (CBDC) Programme during its Second Phase**

## **Final Draft Report of an external evaluation conducted in January and February 2002**

### **I. Introduction and background**

The Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation (CBDC) Programme grew out of discussions in and around the Keystone International Dialogue on Plant Genetic Resources from 1989–92. The programme was officially established in 1994 by several Dialogue participants, who committed themselves and their organizations to support and demonstrate the viability and importance of farmer- and community-led innovation to agrobiodiversity research, conservation and utilization. Having completed its first phase, the programme is now in the midst of a second four-year phase (2000–04), and starting to plan for a third (2005–beyond).

CBDC currently encompasses 14 member groups, including 11 institutions that oversee national programmes in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and three organisations based in the North. CBDC members include NGOs, university and government research institutes and a national gene bank. Despite some turnover in participating groups, the majority of CBDC members have been involved since the start of the programme.

Among existing agrobiodiversity networks, CBDC is unique in combining the following aspects in its mission and operations: a) facilitating an active multilevel discourse on community biodiversity issues; b) supporting projects that bring scientific methods and training to local crops development and conservation; c) insisting that equity between and among regions, Southern and farmer leadership, and cultural knowledge are essential to more adequate knowledge and use of PGRs at local, regional and global levels; and d) a strong emphasis on support for livelihood strategies and food security of local people in contexts of increasing climatic variability and privatization of agricultural resources and knowledge. We are aware of no other programme that combines as many diverse approaches, actors and experiences as effectively as CBDC in its efforts to understand and defend agrobiodiversity and communities that live and work with it. In this, and in its commitment both to farmer- and community-led processes that link local knowledge, customs and practices with national, regional and global policy and debates, and to

improving human understanding of agrobiodiversity, CBDC remains unique.

CBDC remains committed to its founding vision, even as it evolves its approaches to realising this vision. In past years, the programme was known best for its pioneering role recognising and integrating farmers' and indigenous communities' knowledge of plant genetic resources and biodiversity vis-à-vis formal scientific knowledge and institutions. While this work is still comprises the core of its activities, CBDC is developing a stronger political voice and policy focus in response to changing international political and economic conditions and trends. Examples of this evolution are evident in the programme's increased emphasis on the contributions and importance of culture to agrobiodiversity conservation and agricultural knowledge, and advocacy related to policies that threaten (or protect) agrobiodiversity, especially continued availability of non-proprietary PGR.

### **II. Scope and objectives of the evaluation**

Core donors to the CBDC programme commissioned this evaluation: the Biodiversity Fund (which coordinated the process), SIDA and the Development Fund. Another donor, IDRC, provided input in the process of developing terms of reference (TOR), as did the CBDC Programme Planning Committee (PCC). While noting the importance of the first phase to the present situation, the TOR focused the evaluation clearly on the activities, operations, trends and achievements of CBDC's second and current phase. The TOR identified two primary objectives:

- Providing the 4 donor agencies with an insight in the functioning of CBDC necessary for shaping modalities for further co-operation between the donors and CBDC, and
- Providing CBDC with an opportunity to reflect on its activities and functioning and with inputs for

improving its strategies, plans, policies and ways of working.

The TOR identifies the central question of the evaluation as: *How effective is CBDC in developing programmatic identity at the global level including through coherence among the members; what are the strengths and weaknesses?* (The term “identity” was clarified as referring to the CBDC’s internal focus and internal/external profile, rather than identity in the sense of a “branded” international programme.)

The TOR also set out additional questions designed to focus the evaluation on the organisational, contextual and programmatic aspects of CBDC of most interest to the donors. The evaluators were directed to state their findings and conclusions on their analysis of these three areas, and to address the programme’s overall strengths and weaknesses, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness, and overall sustainability. Conclusions regarding the evaluation process and recommendations were to be addressed to the CBDC and donor agencies separately, as appropriate.

The evaluation was conducted by a two-person team, Dr. Melaku Worede of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Ms. Monica Moore of California, USA, during January and February of 2003 (copies of the TOR, evaluators’ resumes and additional background information on the evaluation are available from Evaluation Coordinator Ms. Willy Douma of the Dutch Biodiversity Fund). Given both limited time available to the process and the nature of the questions posed, it was recognized by all parties that the evaluation would be a fundamentally qualitative exercise, grounded in the data collected and analyzed by the evaluators, and informed by their prior relevant experience and expertise.

### III. Evaluation methods

The primary methods used in conducting the evaluation were:

- Extensive review of documents and other materials (see attachment 1).
- Separate orientation sessions with representatives of the PCC and donor agencies on January 13–14, 2003 in The Hague, Netherlands.
- Semi-structured and partly open-ended interviews with as many CBDC global and national staff, participants, stakeholders and supporters as possible. Interviews were conducted in person wherever possible, otherwise by telephone (see attachment 2).
- Multiple meetings with PCC members, including participation in a full PCC meeting held February 12–13, 2003 in Harare Zimbabwe.

- Field visits to a national partner in the SE Asian, Latin American and African regions, including semi-structured and partly open-ended interviews, multiple farm visits, other direct observations, and group discussions with staff and key stakeholders of the national programmes. National programmes were visited in Vietnam, Brazil and Zimbabwe (see attachment 3).
- Attendance/observation of a public seminar organized by CBDC and featuring the work of several CBDC national programmes at the World Social Forum in Brazil (see attachment 4).
- Feedback on draft findings and recommendations received during two debriefing sessions, one with the PCC, all Regional Coordinators and Coordinators of three of four national programmes in Africa, and one with representatives of three of four CBDC donor agencies.

### IV. Findings related to major programme accomplishments with discussion of strengths and weaknesses

In its first decade, CBDC has proved itself as an effective and flexible force for a) increasing and promoting contributions of communities and farmers as experts and actors in biodiversity management and conservation; b) increasing awareness of and respect afforded to these contribution by formal scientific institutions; c) increasing the contributions of formal scientific institutions to farmer and community based knowledge systems; and d) developing and promoting political proposals for more effective agrobiodiversity defense, utilization and conservation. As the findings in this section indicate, there is no question as to the need and desirability for CBDC’s ongoing existence and continued expansion of its capacities as a global programme and as a network. Similarly, there is no question that many steps can and should be taken to increase the programme’s impacts, efficiency and sustainability. Findings and recommendations relating to CBDC’s overall strengths and weaknesses are listed immediately below; followed by additional findings and recommendations regarding specific structures and elements of the CBDC programme in the next section.

A. The CBDC programme has accelerated positive shifts in “conventional wisdom” related to plant breeding and biodiversity conservation during the past 10 years. That farmers and farming communities are important actors in agrobiodiversity conservation is now

an acceptable mainstream position, for example. Such widespread acceptance of ideas considered radical less than a decade is a notable achievement. While many other actors also contributed to its occurrence, this success is attributable in no small part to CBDC programme efforts.

B. CBDC has made significant contributions developing and documenting concepts and methods for involving and empowering farming communities to preserve and increase biodiversity in and around their fields. National programmes clearly demonstrate that farmers are capable of co-planning and implementing sophisticated breeding programs that preserve and/or improve valuable, locally adapted materials (see also PPB/PVS T-Line discussion); of managing highly functional seed supply systems (see also SSS T-Line discussion); and of preserving domesticated, semi- domesticated and non-domesticated biodiversity (see also NDSDB T-line discussion). The processes CBDC uses in establishing these facts involve actors from many sectors, including local and national authorities, university scientists, researchers, extension personnel and others within formal scientific institutions, as well as different groups within farming communities. Spillover effects involve additional crops and settings (e.g. home and community gardens) outside the formal programme. Thus CBDC contribute directly to the development of a more adequate knowledge base of biodiversity conservation and management even as it facilitates mainstreaming of CBDC concepts and techniques at local, national, regional and sometimes global levels (see also Mainstreaming T-Line discussion). These contributions and impacts are generally not visible as CBDC “products,” but no less real because of that. While much can be done to increase both CBDC’s impacts and visibility, the programme’s track record thus far shows that it is well positioned to make important additional contributions in the future.

C. CBDC partners have political influence and have achieved some policy objectives. As an example, policy T-Line coordinator ETC together with CBDC partners have a recognized specialty in coining and popularizing terms that re-define policy debates while exposing and educating the public about the economic interests behind bio-devastation (“Terminator Technology” is probably the best example of this). Given the economic interests and power relationships involved, policy victories are generally few, temporary and never unalloyed, as the partners’ work vis-a-vis the Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources and the Convention on Biological Diversity illustrate. Often damage control is the most that can be won. Yet every policy that minimizes damage, reduces the scope of harm and/or slows the rate of assault on agrobiodiversity and farming communities is important. CBDC partners have committed themselves to increase their activities, collaborations and impacts with respect to the policy (see also Policy T-Line discussion).

D. Collectively, the CBDC national programmes have rescued numerous farmers’ varieties, an unknown proportion of which would otherwise no longer exist. According to its 2002 Report of Activities, CBDC activities encompass more than 3,000 species of 18 food crops and 150 species of forest and non-cultivated plants, and involve some 15,000 families in approximately 300 rural locations in Asia, Africa and Latin America, an impressive scope of experience by any standard. Spillover effects involve additional crops outside the formal programme in other farmers’ fields and home gardens. Many rare or endangered varieties with national programmes are now are grown and exchanged through new local and regional seed distribution networks created by CBDC programmes. A smaller number are being improved according to selection criteria of farming communities. Some rare and endangered semi and non-domesticated species have new value to farmers due to new products and markets.<sup>1</sup>

E. CBDC national programmes have resulted in measurable improvements in farmers and farming communities’ food security, food sovereignty and family incomes. Although the evaluation methods did not permit us to quantify them, we heard and saw compelling evidence of such impacts in every field visit, including direct testimony of participating farmers.<sup>2</sup> We also heard anecdotal evidence from programmes we did not visit that strongly suggest such impacts are not unusual. This is an area that deserves further study and documentation (by partners and/or others), and is likely to be of value to the programme’s policy work.

F. CBDC is a highly leveraged and networked programme. Programme partners routinely mobilize complementary resources and draw on contacts outside the programme in carrying out CBDC activities. Most of the hosting institutions have extensive and deep relations with individuals, institutions and networks they can call

<sup>1</sup> We saw and heard strong evidence of newly flourishing markets for seeds of many farmers’ varieties and OPVs (including varieties improved by CBDC partner groups) in every region we visited. As an example, the Brazil national program has created a certified label to add value to its shade-grown mate, and potentially other community-produced and processed products from semi- and non-domesticated species, e.g. brooms and other non-timber, non-food forest products (e.g. medicinal plants).

<sup>2</sup> As an example, when asked about a tobacco barn in obvious disrepair, one farmer in Paraná state (Brazil) grinned and said “I don’t have to grow tobacco any more! It’s terrible stuff, the poisons you use are terrible. Thanks to all this other stuff [i.e. seed and mate sales developed through the CBDC programme], I’m rich enough not to have to deal with it anymore!”

on in pursuing CBDC programme objectives. Recommendations regarding how CBDC can expand and use ties with its allies even more effectively are made in other sections; the finding here is that these linkages confer tremendous benefits to the programme and should not be taken for granted by CBDC partners or donors. Indeed the network matrix that CBDC lives, breathes and carries out its work within help to make it one of the most cost-effective programmes either of us have ever seen.

G. CBDC is a consciously evolving “learning organization.” Some of the partner organizations, and most members of the PCC have a strong institutional traditions and personal preferences for joint examination and reflection on their individual and collective experiences. These habits and skills have strengthened the leadership capacity and that has served them well throughout their first decade.

## **V. Findings and recommendations related to organizational governing structures, programme decision making and effectiveness**

The severity of threats to ecologically sustainable, farmer- and community-led utilization and conservation of genetic and agricultural biodiversity have increased dramatically since CBDC began more than a decade ago. Prominent among these are corporate-led economic globalization processes and unbalanced, undemocratic trade regimes (including WTO agricultural policies, and related commercial and governmental efforts to force universal acceptance of industry-promoted proprietary agricultural biotechnologies and intellectual property regimes). As CBDC completes its second phase and prepares for a third, improvements in its programme structure and decision-making processes are needed for it to exert a stronger global influence, develop itself as a network, and expand its capacities to meet rapidly evolving political, economic and ecological conditions. We therefore find and recommend to the PCC and other leadership elements within CBDC:

A. An increased focus on developing and implementing policy strategies at global and regional levels as an urgent priority.<sup>3</sup> Given the magnitude of threats to agrobiodiversity

<sup>3</sup> We understand that many CBDC national programs give attention to national policy issues, including exploring work at the regional level in some cases. This work is critical and must continue; however our focus here is on CBDC’s capacity to develop policy priorities and strategies as a global programme and network.

and smallholder agriculturalists around the world, we believe CBDC has no choice but to strengthen its global and regional policy work beyond current levels. The positions and policy targets CBDC selects to implement this recommendation can be many; the point is that the programme collectively recognize the importance of its policy work to safeguarding community-based biodiversity conservation, and develop its capacities to impact policy at global and regional levels. During the evaluation PCC members indicated their intention to move in this direction; we strongly suggest that they begin by jointly identifying priority policy targets over the next 24 months, focusing on opportunities to increase partners’ advocacy capacity in these two areas:

1. Preventing enactment of, and/or weakening of existing, global and regional policies that threaten or undermine community-led systems of resource use, conserve and enhance genetic and natural resources; and
2. Generating compelling and creative policy-relevant presentations/ demonstrations of short-, medium- and long-term social, cultural, economic and ecological advantages of community based biodiversity utilization and conservation in targeted policy arenas.

B. The recent reorganization of the GCU and ACU appear to CBDC partners as well as donors to be working well, and have improved or resolved serious concerns about timely reporting, provision of financial information, poor communications, and other issues mentioned in past evaluations and notes from the February 2002 joint donor/PCC meeting in Oslo. These changes are significant both in terms of CBDC internal capacities and cost-effectiveness, and as a sign of the programme’s ability to respond to donor concerns and successfully address internal operational problems. Because the recently revised GCU and ACU structures continue to function well, we did not include them on the list of CBDC elements requiring additional internal review. Other than recommending continued attention in a few areas, the work of the GPC and ACU are not discussed further except in relation to their participation on the PCC and vis-à-vis the T-Lines, RCUs and national programmes. The areas where additional attention is recommended are:

1. continued focus on improving cash flow projection and budget development and monitoring capacity;
2. continued attention on improving timely reporting and analytical content of annual reports; and
3. exploration of how available skills, resources and technologies could be applied to reduce language-related communications barriers among partners. This could include consulting with other multi-lingual networks about how they address similar

problems, more use of translation software, re-allocation of additional resources to translation and interpretation, etc.

C. As the CBDC's primary governing body, the PCC should establish a process and timeframe for an accelerated internal review of the current mandates, procedures and support levels being provided to three of its most critical operational elements: the PCC itself, the T- Lines and the RCUs. We hope and intend for this report and its detailed recommendations regarding these three elements and other aspects of the programme serve as major contributions to this internal review. But we also note that an external evaluation cannot substitute for focused internal review by the PCC and other key elements of the CBDC.

D. We recommend that the PCC formally clarify and articulate its collective responsibilities and procedures, both regarding its major functions as a governing body, and its relation to other CBDC components. The following list is not comprehensive, but identifies areas we consider most in need of clarification. Additional recommendations for each area are included in relevant sections throughout the report.

1. Set goals and objectives for institutional development of CBDC as a programme and network. Critical areas include ongoing generation of resources needed to support the program; development of standards, roles and procedures for identifying and crediting CBDC outputs; procedures for ensuring high levels of internal transparency and appropriate external transparency; procedures for improving communications among key CBDC elements; processes for monitoring and resolving of problems and developments that affect CBDC efforts; creating processes for identifying and responding to significant opportunities; and maintaining and expanding CBDC's relationships with allied organizations, networks and movements
2. Development of mainstreaming goals, including both identification of objectives for collaboration with, and changes desired within, formal science institutions; and development of a basic CBDC communication strategy and core messages for working with various segments of popular (vs. technical) media.
3. Global policy development (includes prioritization of external advocacy strategies, and integration of partners' regional policy work within global strategies)
4. Supporting and assisting the work of all T-Line coordinators and teams (includes promoting synergies among the different T-Lines)
5. Supporting and assisting the work of the regional coordinators
6. Increased attention to ongoing development of the skills and capacities of individuals and organizations

responsible for CBDC programs at all levels, and to retaining and supporting these individuals and organizations within, or in working relationships with, the CBDC programme and network.

7. Improved strategic planning capacity is needed to inform all aspects of CBDC's work, including those listed immediately above. We recommend the PCC give collective planning and strategy development a higher priority than it does now.

E. As the PCC's governance responsibilities increase, planning and preparations for PCC meetings should receive more attention, not just to improve efficiency but also to maintain esprit d'corps of PCC members and promote synergies. The CBDC's work will be necessary for some time to come, and attention should be given to sustaining the people doing it. Several PCC members mentioned that the quality of their interactions and collective work had suffered when the PCC had time to deal only or primarily with urgent organizational management and administrative issues and funding crises. While such problems obviously must be addressed, the collective time of the group does not need to and should not be used only for these purposes. We therefore recommend that the PCC schedule at least one in-person meeting of its full membership annually, preferably in a pleasant and relaxing setting. Rotating the location of meetings to facilitate field trips or other possibilities for learning and exchange should be considered as well. The in-person meetings can be supplemented by conference calls and electronic communications throughout the year, but they should not be done without. They should last at least two days (three should be considered) to facilitate shared reflection, analysis and planning. Devoting adequate time to prepare for this meeting in advance is crucial. Regular agenda items with should include a financial review; fundraising report; review of policy priorities; review of mainstreaming targets; space for dealing with urgent issues or emergencies including any pressing T-Line issues; but these should not be allowed to take up all available time. Adequate time must also be given to in depth consideration of prepared topic(s) (e.g. priorities for new partners and network expansion, policy goals and strategy development, region-specific issues, phase three planning etc).

F. Two details needing PCC attention came to our attention during the evaluation:

1. Drafting and finalization of a revised set of CBDC protocols has been stalled for a long period (several years). This long delay could mean that the document is no longer the most appropriate instrument for clarifying CBDC policy. But such a long delay in updating such a key document clearly

indicates a problem in the CBDC's ability to follow through on important internal decisions. At this point the PCC needs to decide if these protocols are still the most appropriate instruments for clarifying its standards and procedures, and if so, clearly designate whom, how and by when they need to be finalized, ideally within the next 6 months. If the protocols are found no longer useful, an alternative means of setting out standards and expectations needs to be developed.

2. In the past the CBDC had a global advisory board and that at least one region has identified a number of regional advisors, yet no information is available about their current roles, responsibilities or membership, if any. Because such bodies can serve as important resources when articulated within a clear programmatic and strategic framework, we recommend the PCC review and redefine the purpose(s), operating procedures and membership of its advisory bodies to ensure they are contributing as intended, and if further clarification and facilitation could increase the value of their contributions to the programme. Alternatively, the PCC may decide not to continue to utilize advisory board(s) if it finds they are not needed or relevant to CBDC's current context. We do not recommend one approach over the other; rather our point is that PCC should consciously decide if and how it wishes to involve advisory board(s) within its program, and develop a plan for doing so (or not) accordingly.

## VI. Analysis and recommendations of T-Line System and specific T-Lines

The CBDC's six transversal lines (T-Lines) were designed to address concerns by partners and donors that the CBDC Programme was not structured to support coherent development or advocacy of common concepts, standards, policies, or even basic programmed communications, at the inter-regional and global levels (these concerns were also noted in previous CBDC evaluation reports to which we had access). Since the T-Lines are meant to provide the central structure for most of CBDC's inter-regional work, we spent more time understanding and analyzing them compared to other programme structures, and present much more detailed findings and recommendations in this section than others.

In theory, the T-Lines could provide a functional framework for developing collective concepts, standards, policies, practices, etc. within CBDC. The focus of the six T-Lines—participatory plant breeding and participatory varietal selection; seed saving systems; non-domesticated and semi domesticated bio-diversity; gender; policy; and

mainstreaming—are well chosen, and taken together, constitute a practical map of CBDC's major interests and commitments. Each T-Line topic is inter-related to the others, and all are crucial to CBDC's mission (see Attachment x for a schematic interpretation developed by the evaluators in an attempt to illustrate T-Lines interrelationships). The fact that activities related to each T-Line are taking place on every continent reflects the importance of the T-Line themes to the CBDC core program.

In practice, neither the individual T-Lines nor the T-Line system as a whole are meeting the expectations and needs of the CBDC partners as originally intended. The goals of every T-Line are either overly ambitious, unclear, unfocused, not shared among all participants, or some combination of these. T-Line coordinators and participants' expectations, responsibilities and work plans either were never fully clarified, or abandoned without a clear replacement plan and timeline when the initial plan did not work as expected. Most T-Lines have not developed regular communication processes, nor has the relationship of the T-Lines to other critical CBDC structures (especially to the RCUs and PCC) been thought through in theory or practice. These weaknesses have been compounded by changes in staffing, language barriers and by uncertainties in funding while the T-Line system was being put into place.

While the T-Line system is still flawed and results from the system as a whole are less than impressive to date, in fact the T-Lines have succeeded in moving CBDC significantly toward its goal of greater integration at the interregional and global level. Valuable progress toward establishing every T-Lines has been made, all are operating in some form, and most maintain some kind of internal communications, however irregular. Some T-Line coordinators have compiled baseline information about partners activities, some have prioritized information exchange, some have developed entirely new tools based on CBDC approaches, some have developed new conceptual frameworks for their T-Line, and some facilitate other partners' projects and contributions intended to further particular goals. This progress is very uneven within and among the T-Lines, and within and among regions, illustrating both the challenges to systematizing T-Line work more effectively, as well as remarkable creativity on the part of some T-Line coordinators. We think it also indicates that the system is well worth working with to evolve into a more functional and productive platform.

### A. System-level recommendations

Because a well functioning T-Line system will greatly strengthen both the technical and political aspects of the CBDC programme, we recommend improving it as a priority for all CBDC elements. This will require sustained attention and ongoing internal review to modify the system so that it provides the programmatic framework as originally intended. The following recommendations are directed both at the T-Line system level, followed by suggestions specific to particular T-Lines:

1. Development and implementation of a reasonable work plan for each T-Line, which has been a problem for all T-Line coordinators. Similarly, inconsistent participation by CBDC members in T-Line processes is a constant issue as well. We recommend that all T-Lines review their activities to date and focus their work as follows. Each T-Line coordinator should identify a major theme or focus, and a limited number of annual or biennial objectives, in consultation with all participating national programmes. The themes should build in some way on work done by each T-Line to date. Both themes and objectives should be considered useful, strategic and achievable by coordinators and most if not all participating national programmes.
2. Input on what themes and objectives would be valuable to other parts of the CBDC system (PCC, RCUs, other T-Lines, key stakeholders) should be solicited to the extent possible as well. This should be done as soon as possible so that T-Line work for remainder of phase two is shaped by the new themes and objectives, and enough experience is gained with this approach to inform T-Line planning for the third phase. Focusing T-Line work should help develop more appropriate internal communications channels, encourage collective prioritization of T-Line work, clarify where the coordinators are most accountable to T-Line participants, and vice versa. Ideally it will also facilitate processes for identifying and sharing new concepts and approaches that emerge from T-Line subject areas.
3. To increase transparency, and the ability of all parts of CBDC to assist the others, T-Line coordinators should communicate their annual or biennial priorities to each other and to the PCC and RCUs. T-Line coordinators, the PCC and RCUs should regularly update each other about what groups in each region are participating in what T-Line, additional support requested by the different T-Lines beyond the basic budget allocation, and what additional support the GCU, ACU, PCC or RCUs can make available to the T-Lines (if any). Towards these ends, an agenda item focused on T-Line-related issues should be a regular feature of PCC and RCU meetings and reporting.
4. The adequacy of the standard funding allocation for T-Line work needs to be reviewed by each T-Line in light of their newly selected themes and work plans. If the funds assigned are more than adequate, the T-Line could support related work in other T-Lines, or inform the PCC so that the unneeded portion can be reassigned to support strategic work in other parts of the programme. If existing funds are sufficient, work can proceed immediately on that basis. If additional funds are needed to carry out the work plan, the coordinator should develop a supplemental budget and discuss with the PCC the possibilities for either re-allocating funds from elsewhere, or seeking additional support to carry them out, including consulting with the donor agencies regarding additional possibilities for funding within or outside of their own agency's programmes.
5. Several CBDC members urged that specific individuals within organizations be identified both as T-Line coordinators and contacts/participants as a way to increase clarity and accountability within the system. We think this is a good idea and recommend that member groups that have not yet done so select specific people for these tasks, and that all partner groups notify the PCC and other partners who within their organizations has what roles in relation to the T-Lines.
6. During the evaluation, the idea came up that in some cases, coordination of some T-Lines might be most effectively handled by a team of two people from different regions, both as a means of sharing coordination duties and to build more regional links and language capacity into the T-Line structure. No specific proposals were suggested and we did not explore the idea further. Still, we think it is an interesting enough idea to recommend openness in exploring it, or other potential alternative arrangements for T-Line coordination, on a case-by-case basis. A reasonable starting point, should any T-Line coordinator wish to initiate this kind of exploration, would be to present a short concept paper in writing to the PCC for discussion at its next meeting, or by conference call if the proposal is considered time sensitive.

## **B. T-Line specific findings and recommendations**

## 1. Participatory Plant Breeding/ Participatory Varietal Selection (PPB/PVS)

Overall: The wealth and diversity of PPB/PVS and SSS related experience (which together form the original core of CBDC activity) within CBDC is truly remarkable. To name but a few examples, we visited or reviewed evidence of farmer directed and implemented recurrent maize breeding programmes in Brazil; PPB/PVS programmes reflecting the preferences and needs of indigenous communities in Colombia, Chile and Peru; experimental collaboration with a private sector seed company in Zimbabwe; PPB/PVS and SSS programmes in Mali and Burkina Faso that were greatly improved by incorporating gender analysis; innovative adaptations of Farmer Field School methods in Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand; and productive collaboration with regional sister programmes spun off from CBDC in earlier years, for example BUCAP.

Unfortunately, the PPB/PVS T-Line is able to monitor and support only a small number of national projects due to inconsistent feedback (just 6 partners responded to repeated requests to provide information for the T-Line's baseline survey and needs assessment, for example). In fact it was the enormous contrast between the amount and variety of work in the field and its lack of reference to the T-line designed to support and develop it that led us to identify lack of clarity of focus and common objectives as key weakness of the T-Line system overall. Here we wish to stress again that the diversity of the work being done by partners is not a problem: the diversity of work is a strength. The problem is in not clarifying how and in what ways each T-Line can focus support for these efforts (technically and through networking), and that almost no attention is given to how to incorporate this diversity into programme-wide strategies to achieve broader policy and mainstreaming goals.

Our suggested remedy to the problems listed by participants of this and other T-Lines (e.g. sporadic reporting, lack of inter-regional exchange despite strong regional work, lack of feedback and follow-through) is to focus on a primary theme and select a short list of useful, strategic and feasible activities to be undertaken by T-Line participants. The initial baseline survey and needs assessment already compiled by the coordinator will be useful in facilitating selection of a T-Line theme and near term objectives.

Specific recommendations:

- a) The importance of training, variability in training skills and availability and the strong desire for more training opportunities and exchanges were strong themes in most of our interviews related to this T-

Line. We therefore suggest that a focus on training as an initial T-Line theme, including training-related content from other T-Lines (especially SSS, gender and NDSDB). If this is the theme selected, we further suggest that the pros, cons and feasibility of a global workshop on training, perhaps building on a series of prior regional workshops should be considered.

- b) We recommend discussions between this T-Line, the PCC and the mainstreaming, policy and gender T-Line coordinators to explore how CBDC's PPB/PVS work can better support and receive support from, these T-Lines.
- c) As a specific element of this, we recommend that the PPB/PVS and mainstreaming T-Lines develop a way to compile and make visible on the internet the growing body of documentation of national and regional PPB/PVS (and SSS) experiences being produced by CBDC partners, and to which CBDC partners have contributed. This listing should include information on how and from whom copies can be obtained wherever possible. (Ideally at least CBDC reports would accessible in electronic form, but this may not be a priority in the second phase.) Once developed, this arrangement hopefully can serve as a model for increasing the visibility and accessibility of materials developed by other T-Lines.
- d) All regions have noted the importance of the market contexts in which their PPB/PVS work take place; some have identified this as an area about which more information is needed. A discussion of this point and recommendations/reflections from the T-Line might be valuable and should be considered.
- e) A frank discussion of needs and expectations about reporting national programme activities should take place, recognizing that this reporting is essential for a variety of purposes, and also that there may be unique constraints on reporting on field experiences in remote locations, particularly under conditions of war.
- f) As in other areas, language barriers can create serious obstacles to communicating PPB/PVS experiences. We suggest this T-Line consider using or adapting the "Key Concept Paper" approach recommended for the NDSDB T-Line below as a possible means of bridging language gaps.



## 2. Sustainable Seed Supply Systems (SSS)

Overall: Although SSS is an area where much innovative work is being done,<sup>4</sup> coordinator and other staffing changes, together with language barriers and possibly other reasons have slowed development of this T-Line and inter-regional efforts related to SSS. Because no annual report for this T-Line was available as of this writing (the only T-Line for which this is the case), our knowledge of activities comes solely from field visits, interviews and written reports from national programmes.

Even our necessarily superficial review of programme work in this area clearly indicates that CBDC should be making important contributions to both formal and informal knowledge bases related to SSS, which are at the heart of CBDC's mission and integral to all aspects of its program. Yet little of the CBDC's work on SSS is shared among CBDC partners, or recorded and communicated outside the programme to those who could benefit from or amplify the results of these experiences. At the same time, pressures on farmer's varieties (and on farmers themselves), NDSDB and other elements of agrobiodiversity are relentless. The food security and incomes of most rural populations, and the food sovereignty in all regions are similarly threatened by increasing economic concentration and climate change.

For all these reasons, we consider improving the capacity of the SSS T-Line to support and strengthen CBDC programme work in this area, including demonstrating and promoting new approaches, techniques and partnerships, to be essential. New policy opportunities and challenges created by the new Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources and Conservation Trust Fund (among other instruments) increase the urgency of this task.

Specific recommendations:

- a) We suggest an initial focus on creating an inventory of CBDC's SSS experiences to date (including policy advocacy experience), and further develop the comprehensive framework for community seed saving systems complex discussed at the February 2003 PCC meeting in Harare.<sup>5</sup> These should be

<sup>4</sup> Due to space constraints we cannot include details of specific programme efforts, but want to at least mention the important achievements by the national programmes in Brazil, excellent progress and intra-regional exchanges in and between Zimbabwe and Mali, the strong cultural orientation of SSS in Latin America, SSS policy advocacy in the Philippines, integration of SSS within Farmer Field Schools in Vietnam, and exploration of SSS under conditions of war in Sierra Leone and Colombia.

<sup>5</sup> See attachment 6 for evaluators' notes from the PCC brainstorming session on this topic.

compiled in annotated outline form as soon as possible to inform further work in the area.

- b) We recommend a short term mainstreaming objective of increasing formal system understanding of the critical relationship between ex-situ and in situ seed conservation strategies, i.e. how dependent the former is upon the latter, with respect to food security/sovereignty, poverty alleviation and livelihood improvement and long-term biodiversity conservation and enhancement.
- c) We recommend a related short-term policy goal of ensuring that criteria reflecting this relationship are adopted and implemented within existing and potential new international agreements and national law.
- d) Discussions by the PCC and the mainstreaming and policy T-Lines regarding how they can help guide and assist with recommendations 2 and 3 above are strongly recommended.
- e) A training workshop on SSS should be considered and budgeted for if this is designated a priority.

## 3. Non-domesticated and semi-domesticated biodiversity (NDSNB)

Overall: The articulation of this T-Line is in itself strong evidence of CBDC's capacity to develop new conceptual approaches to biodiversity conservation and utilization. CBDC, and the NDSNB T-Line participants should be recognized for their cutting edge work developing the ecosystems components of long-term agricultural biodiversity conservation and utilization.

Specific recommendations

- a) This T-Line is unique in that it operates primarily as a regional effort, based almost entirely on Latin American experiences. While this geographic exclusivity has not been experienced as a major problem to date, and may even have been helpful in establishing the T-Line, it has become and will remain a weakness if not addressed, because it limits application and relevance of these concepts, and prevents their further development based on important experiences in other regions. Thus we recommend the T-Line focus on opening their processes and sharing their findings more widely among and beyond CBDC partners and stakeholders. Since we saw strong interest in

broadening participation and excitement about significant related work in other areas during the evaluation process, we are confident that this can happen in the relatively near future.

- b) The T-Line coordinator has prepared an extensive document developing a theoretical framework and a series of recommendations for NDSDB work within the programme. Discussion and appropriate modification of this based on the experiences of all national programmes working with NDSDB could provide a focus for the T-Line's work for the next 12 months or so, with the objective of producing a common understanding of the topic, shared principles, concepts and approaches, and a collectively developed work plan.
- c) Whether or not this approach is followed, we recommend that the T-Line develop, translate and circulate to interested CBDC members a series of short papers presenting key elements and concepts, and overviews of significant NDSDB work within each region (something like 5-7 papers of 2-3 pages each should be adequate and feasible). These could include an introduction to the suggested framework, the concept of living collections, key roles of cultural/indigenous knowledge, etc.
- d) We recommend that a T-Line workshop on NDSDB be organized before the end of the second phase as a means of broaden and systematize the base of CBDC's work in this area, and to provide a forum for developing T-Line goals, objectives and a work plan for the third phase.
- e) While language barriers are always a problem to some extent, it is our impression that they may be more problematic in this T-Line than most. We therefore recommend that this issue be considered by the coordinator in consultation with T-Line participants and other partners, and addressed as effectively and creatively as possible.

#### 4. Gender

Overall: This is another T-Line that has suffered from staffing changes, and until recently was something of an orphan in the system. The situation was remedied when SEARICE assumed co-ordination of the T-Line in the third quarter of 2002, and began to survey and assess partner's experiences and needs in this area. Much information on relevant activities, insights and needs of many partners has begun to surface as a result, and it is apparent both from the response to the survey and evaluation interviews that a focus on gender is one of CBDC's strength, since interest in this T-Line is high

among partners, even if actual activity levels vary considerably among national programmes and do not reach regional levels.<sup>6</sup> With energetic facilitation by the coordinator, establishing a focus and objectives for the Gender T-Line could be accomplished in reasonably short order, and a work plan developed that contributes to national and regional programmes, other T-Lines and CBDC's global advocacy and mainstreaming agendas.

Specific recommendations:

- a) A possible focus for the T-Line might be capacity building in gender analysis. This been identified as a need by T-Line participants, and several partners have very useful experiences in developing their own capacity that could be shared. This approach could combine presentations of different understandings and methods, systematic exchanges of information and materials, exploration of how gender analysis can be integrated with and improve work in other T-Lines, and actual training, depending on how partners wanted to pursue it.
- b) We note that an effort to develop and carry out precisely this type of project already has been made on a regional (SE Asia) basis, although it was not funded or implemented. If there is interest in developing this approach at the global level, the proposal prepared in this effort and the thinking behind it might be used as a starting point for T-Line discussions. If appropriate, the proposal could even be re-written and used to seek additional support to carry out the T-Line work plan, should this be needed.
- c) Many CBDC partners have mentioned impressive results and impacts of gender-informed approaches to their PPB/PVS, SSS and NDSDB work that could be written up and published as case studies targeted for a variety of uses. We recommend that the Gender T-Line consider this as a possible priority activity, ideally in consultation with the PCC, and other T-Line coordinators.

#### 5. Policy

Overall: The work of the Policy T-Line coordinating organization (ETC Group) is widely acknowledged within CBDC as an important strength of the programme, and appreciated for its groundbreaking analysis and provocative definitions of conventional and emerging phenomena relevant to biodiversity

<sup>6</sup> Evaluators found the work on gender by the national programmes in Chile and West Africa particularly interesting.

conservation and utilization. The policy T-Line focuses on ongoing trend monitoring and issue education, information dissemination, training and advocacy. It also facilitates internal debates and position development in selected topics and policy arenas. The work of this T-Line tends to be very focused, intense and periodically interactive, and its activities are well integrated within key CBDC structures and some national programmes. High levels of mutual respect among partners are evident in the T-Line's operations.

Specific recommendations:

- a) This T-Line operated differently from others, since ETC's organizational approach already encompasses most aspects of CBDC's programme and many of its partners. Given this, we suggest two complementary themes focused on increasing CBDC capacity to influence policy debates and achieve specific objectives. The first is to examine how more CBDC elements and capacities can be incorporated into strategies to achieve one specific policy goal selected by the PCC (or possibly two, but we recommend keeping a tight focus while trying out this approach). For example, are there mainstreaming targets whose consideration or endorsement of pertinent CBDC findings would increase support the policy case being made? How might gender analysis sharpen CBDC's policy influence? In what policy relevant settings might case studies, testimony or other evidence of broad scale community seed saving systems influence the debate in support of the policy goal? Would experiences from particular countries or regions be most persuasive? These examples suggest how more systematic exploration of using CBDC experience, knowledge and contacts could increase its policy impacts and improve strategies in many areas.
- b) Policy discussion and T-Line progress reports should be a standing feature of PCC annual meetings and conference calls. This will help the PCC to focus on developing CBDC's global policy agenda and increase communication about policy goals and strategies more generally; both of these are likely to increase CBDC's policy impact.
- c) We also recommend that the PCC and RCUs explore how CBDC might better support partners in developing and pursuing policy changes based on work at the regional level. Opening complementary new policy fronts that build on partners' work would in different regions would facilitate scaling up of local and national achievements, and contribute to policy change at the global level.

Example of work that could be explored in this regard include community certification and marketing strategies coming out of Latin America, regionally-focused efforts to preserve farmers' right to seeds and create policy frameworks that support community-based breeding and seed supplies, policy work focused on WTO and regional trade agreement impacts on biodiversity and farmers rights, etc.

- d) Related to the above, we recommend that a research fund be established to support studies and other specific activities to support regional policy work, especially if the work cannot be done well by CBDC partners groups (for example legal reviews, marketing studies, economic analysis). Looking at the skills base and disciplinary backgrounds of most PCC members, regional and national programme coordinators, one sees that staff with agronomy, biology, veterinary, and other so-called "hard science" training far out-number those with backgrounds in economics and other social sciences, law, investigative journalism (for examples). Yet all of these areas are important to successful policy work, and related expertise should be available to groups if it is essential to the task at hand.
- e) A creative idea was suggested that may not be a high priority, but could be considered as specific opportunities present themselves. The idea is for CBDC member organizations to host staff from other CBDC partner groups for short-term (1-3 months) policy-focused internships or exchanges designed that were to increase the policy advocacy skills of the staff being hosted and promote closer collaboration between the groups.

## 6. Mainstreaming

Overall: The T-Line on mainstreaming thus far has emphasized influencing university level debate, research and training programmes related to biodiversity management and conservation in an attempt to redefine old and introduce new concepts and methods, with the goal of shaping the formation of future professionals in these fields. The coordinator's current focus is developing a multilingual web-based course and training materials based directly on CBDC principles and experiences. The web course (which is still being constructed) builds on strengths of the T-Line coordinator's base

within a northern research institution, and staff and connections made available through the institution. The choice to develop the website was opportunistic and creative, and although made without discussion or consultation with other partners, the website could well develop into an influential and cost effective tool for the global programme.

Meanwhile, a remarkable array of activities aimed at mainstreaming awareness, support and replication of CBDC approaches are incorporated within the activities of all CBDC partner organizations and national programmes, and to a lesser extent some regional programmes and T-Lines.<sup>7</sup> These efforts are undertaken in support of various organizational, or national/regional programme goals, without reference to global strategies or targets, and thus reflect different understandings of the relation of mainstreaming to achieving CBDC goals, and different target audiences, methods, and desired outcomes. This diversity of horizontal, vertical and geographic mainstreaming activities is positive and a strength of the programme; the associated weakness is that there is little information flow or joint consideration among partners about their mainstreaming activities, priorities, challenges and achievements. In our view the primary challenge for this T-Line is to incorporate the efforts and priorities of more partners in mainstreaming key concepts, methods, ethics, results, etc., in order to achieve greater results than are possible when every group works on its own.

#### Specific recommendations:

- a) We recommend that the PCC, or some subset of its members, become the body of participants in this T-Line. In this capacity they should work with the coordinator to survey priority mainstreaming needs and targets, and develop approaches to meeting them according to CBDC's global priorities and strengths. Membership in the T-Line can include non-PCC members as well, of course. But to ensure ongoing collective consideration of global mainstreaming needs and opportunities, and ongoing development of the CBDC website content according to those needs as appropriate and

feasible, it seems advisable that at least half the T-Line members are also on the PCC.

- b) Work on the website is well advanced, so an initial theme could be how it can be further developed, promoted and used to advance selected regional and global goals, key concepts, etc. The coordinator could initiate a sustained conversation with other partners (electronic and in person whenever opportunities present themselves) to explore how they might use the new website. This would build greater awareness of it, and involve more partners in its development. It would also require the coordinators to keep partners updated regarding the timetable and progress toward the launch of the website, and how they can help keep it useful and accurate in future.
- c) Lack of awareness of and access to materials produced by CBDC partners makes the task of mainstreaming its ideas much more difficult than it needs to be. We recommend that the T-Line devise a system for compiling and regularly updating a list of CBDC materials and how to obtain them as a feature of the public website. All CBDC member groups need to cooperate for this to happen, and this seems like the right T-Line to start and coordinate the process.
- d) We recommend that the T-Line also consider establishing a CBDC publishing program. Such a programme might function in any of a variety of ways. Possible approaches might include selecting and translating materials from CBDC partners for broader distribution and/or placement in selected publications (both peer-reviewed and popular); publishing or otherwise co-operating with studies of special relevance to CBDC; documenting selected experiences and findings via case studies (verbal and written reports from the SSS, NDSDB and gender T-Lines, and written reports from some national programmes indicate interest in case studies), etc.
- e) We suggest the coordinator discuss with the PCC the idea of compiling and posting to the website a list of projects and research questions that national and regional programmes and/or T-Lines are willing to explore with graduate students, researchers or others outside of CBDC, if any partners think this would be useful and are interested in attracting this kind of assistance. (Any decision whether or not to accept an offer

<sup>7</sup> National programmes frequently incorporate TV and radio coverage of their events, especially but not only in connection with publicizing seed fairs and festivals, tasting of traditional dishes and recipe competitions and other public gatherings. Several routinely videotape their workshops and conferences and make them available through an internal video library service. The Latin America RCU has produced "Jardín de tus Manos: restaurando vínculos" (The Garden of Your Hands: Restoring Connections), an attractive 20 minute video presenting CBDC concepts and experiences in regional terms and perspectives.

to collaborate would be made by the CBDC partner.)

## VII. Regional Coordinating Units and regional integration

The RCUs play a major role within CBDC. While CBDC is very much a global programme, implementing partners are deeply rooted within South East Asian, African and Latin American regional contexts, and their experience and presence in these regions are crucial to the global programme. We were thus surprised to learn during discussions with the PCC that the original concept of the T-Lines was that they would eventually replace the RCUs. Since then, this idea has been dropped, we think appropriately. Well functioning RCUs clearly are important to all CBDC's global bodies (the T-lines, PCC, GCU and ACU), just as work in the regions is supported by these global structures. How best to balance and support the RCUs and strengthen regional work and structures is not a new topic within CBDC, and significant efforts to increase contacts among national projects has been made in all regions during the second phase already. The following recommendations are intended to continue build on this progress.

A. Regional Coordinators collectively should develop a list of what they consider the essential functions and responsibilities for effective regional coordination within CBDC. This list can be prepared partially or entirely by email if no opportunity exists for the Coordinators to meet together to create and discuss the list in the next 6-9 months. After developing their list, the Regional Cs should present it to the PCC for discussion and possible revision, including discussion of whether adequate financial and other resources are in place to ensure that essential functions are carried out adequately. This process will result in a collectively developed "job description" or Terms of Reference for CBDC Regional Coordinators and the institutions that host them, and provide a forum for reviewing and considering changes to current budget allocations to support regional work, including but not limited to regional coordination.

B. Personal knowledge of and relationships with both key national project staff and the institutional settings in which they work are crucial for Regional Coordinators to carry out their responsibilities. We recommend that unless compelling financial, political or other reasons prevent them, the Regional Coordinators should visit each national project meet at least once every two years, and maintain regular electronic and phone communications in between regarding overall progress, staffing changes, major difficulties, etc. in between these visits.

C. Representatives of each national project and the Regional Coordinator should also be able to meet together every other year, ideally on alternating years in between the Regional C's visits to each project. To make such meetings as economical as possible, they could be planned around T-Line topics or combined with other regional meetings that partners plan to attend when such opportunities arise.

D. Language barriers and unmet translation and interpretation needs are evident in every region at both the intra- and inter-regional levels. In addition to the PCC considering giving greater priority to meeting these needs within the context of current budget allocations, and seeking greater support for this purpose in future, Regional Coordinators and national project staff also need to become more pro-active and creative in seeking innovative and affordable solutions to overcome these barriers, even if they are not complete solutions. As examples, this might include adding translation and interpretation budget lines to other projects for which the hosting institution is seeking funding that could usefully and legitimately be shared with CBDC programme activities; seeking in-kind donations of translation and interpretation services and equipment; exploring low cost internet phone conferencing mechanism and reallocating savings on phone communications to translation of priority materials; seeking multi-lingual staff placements from development technical assistance programs and NGO agencies; partnering with language departments of local colleges and universities; discussions with colleagues in the region about how they address similar problems, etc.

E. Regional Coordination within Africa is less established than in the other regions for several reasons, including that this region has experienced more changes in the partner organizations and coordinating institutions than other regions. Africa also faces serious logistical and infrastructure constraints, language barriers and a unique economic and developmental context. And although the institutions in which the RCUs in Asia and Latin America are based have long histories of collaboration and interaction with other networks in the region, the African RCU is relatively young and some argue that African NGO movements have less of a tradition of establishing and operating through regional networks than those in Latin America. Despite all this, and in strong collaboration with the PCC, the African RCU has made significant progress in the past 18 months in particular, visiting and establishing working relations with all national groups, and working more closely with the PCC. This important work must be continued and hopefully expanded. We recommend that a discussion on this topic take place between the African

Coordinator and host institution, the PCC and donors regarding opportunities for increasing support for this, perhaps convened by the Development Fund, which currently targets its support regionally and has prioritized work in Africa.

## **VIII. CBDC regional and national programmes**

### **A. South East Asia**

The SEAsia CBDC regional programme is coordinated by the South East Asia Regional Institute for Community Education (SEARCE), a Philippine-based NGO, and involves three partner nations: Vietnam, Thailand and Philippines. The national programme in Vietnam is located in the Mekong Delta Region and implemented by the region's research and development programme (MDPSRDI) based at Can Tho University. In Thailand an NGO network (Hag Muang Nan) represents the base of the project which operates within the Nan Province whilst SEARICE is responsible for the CBDC national programme in the Philippines located in the Bohol Province.

The SEAsia projects operate through collaborative links representing various formal and informal institutions that provide technical or material support, or facilitate the establishing of links with farmers, who are the key CBDC partners or key players in project implementation.

Farmers Field Schools (FFS) is an important method that the SEAsia national partners employ in implementing the CBDC work, particularly with respect to PPB/PVS. A Field Guide developed by SEARICE and made available through the RCU (and adapted by each project) facilitates the FFS work, which combines scientific information and methods with local knowledge and practices to enhance the activities pertaining to on-farm varietal selection and development, as well as cultural or crop production practices. The PPB/PVS work in the region is mainly on rice, although other staple crops are included in programme activities.

In the Philippines, farmers carried out varietal selection and breeding through SEARICE prior to CBDC's establishment. CBDC now re-introduces and conserves local types and farmer selections (mostly red-rice), which farmers grow side by side with modern varieties or make various crossings with the latter for adaptation to various stresses, including tolerance to alkaline soils. Relatively little work is done on other crops, which includes sweet potatoes, cassava, corn and yam. Similarly in Thailand, PVS materials include farmers varieties, modern or

segregating populations of crosses between modern and traditional varieties, and a few other crops like luffa and chili. In Vietnam the PPB/PVS work focuses on modern rice varieties, mainly irrigated rice, where farmers select from segregating materials provided by breeding programmes and made available through lead farmers to the communities. PVS materials are mainly advanced or promising lines from the formal breeding programmes.

In all three national projects, farmers are assisted by scientists and/or NGOs and collaborating institutions (e.g. a local college in Bohol, Philippines or the Rajamangela University in Nan Province, Thailand). In the case of the Vietnam, CBDC programme farmers work with the formal breeding programmes in Cantho and various links with organizations like IRRI (in Vietnam) established through the Agricultural Extension and the Seed Center. Lead farmers are also sent to the Cantho University for training on PPB/PVS, and or seed production in general, and then return to train other farmers in their own communities.

With respect to seed supply aspects, the CBDC SEAsia programme has been operating primarily through a dynamic farmer based approach to sustaining seed supply where farmers operate within their own networks. In addition to building farmers' skills in selection (PPB/PVS) and new cultural techniques for low cost / low input cropping systems, CBDC assists farmers to develop and exchange their own seeds, and all these activities are facilitated through links between farmers groups/clubs and formal institutions (e.g. the Seed Center in Vietnam) or network partners, and to a limited extent by the presence of community seed banks (Philippines and Thailand). Seed production, exchange and distribution activities are, however, limited to rice mainly. Home garden plants and various root crops grown primarily for domestic use or for local markets are about the only other plant materials (some livestock included) farmers continue to produce along with rice and some minor crops.

Activities to include a comprehensive work on NDSDB hardly exists in the SEAsian regional programme, except as this is done through or in cooperation with CBDC's "sister programme" the Biodiversity and Conservation in Asia Programme (BUCAP). The in situ conservation work involving traditional varieties also suffers from "scientific X market interaction," especially because farmers varieties are often considered relatively low yielding despite their better taste and values related to adaptation to adverse growing conditions. In some cases as in the Mekong Delta Project (Vietnam), there is need to maintain the in situ conservation activity with improved incentives for farmers as the cropping pattern

in this region changes in favor of HYVs, since grown under irrigation HYVs provide more income. The CBDC programme has been providing farmers with planting material and compensation to sustain work on this line, with a potential threat of discontinuation for such support if the CBDC project ends, in the absence of future intervention by local governments to provide funding based on growing awareness of the importance of biodiversity for sustainable agriculture. The CBDC partner nations, especially the CBDC - Philippine project, on the other hand are doing a commendable work toward upgrading farmers varieties through enhancement to improve their competitiveness in yield and marketing. In our view, this approach will provide a profound and reliable basis for dealing with the problem of promoting traditional or farmer - bred varieties in the long term.

The CBDC projects may, however, face serious challenges in this respect in the future with the growing role of WTO in the three SEAsia countries, which tends to promote large monocultures of a limited number of uniform varieties and production of such materials by specialized plant breeding and seed production institutions.<sup>8</sup> This will also pose serious limitations on farmers' abilities to develop/produce their own seeds and exchange them with other farmers, including protection of farmer-bred varieties that are competitive in the market. This may become significant, especially in the CBDC-Vietnam case, where in signing with WTO in the future some changes will be expected to occur with the current free market, support system and credit rate regulation in the country -- more so as the country continues to push for cash crops to export for hard currency. Biodiversity conservation will likely suffer major future constraints in view of the declining role of agriculture in these countries (e.g. with respect to aquaculture in Vietnam, industrialization and changes in land use, etc).

On the Policy front, the CBDC partner nations in SEAsia are pursuing these issues at various levels and to varying degrees. The Vietnam project focuses mainly on influencing policies and programme at provincial levels, and has succeeded in encouraging local governments to support project activities (financial and human resources). CBDC in Vietnam has also been active with national level policy discussions, and establishing links with other PGR programmes (e.g. IPGRI, DANIDA and BUCAP), which has contributed to recognition by both local governments and development agencies of the crucial role farmers play in technically oriented work related to variety<sup>9</sup> selection, seed management and production. CBDC in the

Philippines is quite active with national and international policy initiatives and campaigns, advocacy and lobbying on PGR, farmers rights and other issues relevant to equitable use and management of biodiversity. Thailand on the other hand focuses mainly on disseminating information about CBDC activities on PGR issues, with very limited involvement/impact on national level policy advocacy. Put together, CBDC SEAsia has done highly commendable if somewhat uneven work along this T-line, responding to problems and trends unique to each partner nation. The RCU has played a key role in facilitating the sharing of experience among the partners and promoting fora for various debates among CBDC partners and other partner networks and stake holders, often in very interactive ways. Most importantly, the regional programme has succeeded in integrating the policy T-line activities into key CBDC structures, and involving other relevant sectors.

We found the work on gender in the SEAsian CBDC programme to be generally impressive, and were pleased to note that it appears to have inspired growing interest in gender approaches among other partner nations.<sup>2</sup> Related activities focus mainly on identifying problems and needs of women related to PVS/PPB and PGR conservation. Relatively few studies have been made on gender roles on the production systems and the management of PGR, although CBDC has documented the overall significance of women's' roles in different areas of farming systems in the regions. In home gardens (Vietnam) and root growing areas the farmer partners are almost all women, whilst in the rice fields this varies among communities and cultures. We urge that more detailed work be carried out in these areas, with due emphasis on gender differentiation in labor and responsibilities and the existing knowledge and skills related to these functions. We suggest a more coordinated work be considered to ensure the inclusion of women to benefit from their special knowledge and skill, as this is crucial to the improvement and the promotion or enhancement of natural resource management and use. We also believe increased involvement of women in project planning and implementation should be given more attention, and the training of women within the CBDC projects should be more comprehensive to include greater participation in PPB/PVS activities (e.g. in Vietnam).

SEAsia CBDC partners put strong emphasis on mainstreaming by documenting and disseminating information and experiences both within their network, and with other networks and organizations such as BUCAP and IPGRI. The regional programme has been producing a series of publications in the form of technical reports relating to seed production, seed supply

<sup>8</sup> Philippines and Thailand are WTO and AFTA members; Vietnam may join WTO soon.

<sup>9</sup> SEARICE undertook the responsibility of co-coordinating this T-line in the third quarter of 2002.

and various other aspects of community based resource management and use, which are shared among CBDC partners at large. At the community level, training manuals on FFS for PPB/PVS, seed production and cultural practices are published in local languages for use by farmers. In Vietnam the CBDC program provides technical support to BUCAP including breeding materials, technical advice and expertise for biodiversity related projects that BUCAP carries out in North and central Vietnam.

Raising awareness of formal and private sectors about the importance of agro-biodiversity conservation, the role of farmers in the conservation and use of PGR, and policy issues affecting biodiversity is another major mainstreaming activity that SEAsia CBDC partners are pursuing mainly through workshops, field demonstrations and field festivals. This has resulted in important learning experiences among various stakeholders, especially on how to work with the formal sector in mutually supportive and complementary ways that provide unique opportunities to incorporate PGR concerns and foster collaborative links. We suggest the CBDC partners pursue such activities in a more systematic and concerted manner.

In general, the SEAsia CBDC programme has been successful in meeting its major goals in promoting farmer participation in seed development and supply system, and in linking this to the formal sector. Its regional strength also lies in growing success with the establishing of farmer networks, and increasing recognition by government and formal institutions of the role of farmers in PGR management and use. Support for involving farm communities in seed production and seed supply systems to complement existing formal systems, as well as in filling major gaps in the availability of seed supply for crop production is also gaining active support in places like Vietnam, whilst farm communities in the other CBDC projects continue to face serious challenges in this respect. CBDC's future is likely to be more and more constrained in view of the dynamic changes taking place in the SEAsian agricultural development and trade agendas, however. There are, however, opportunities to continue to work along with and channel the growing enthusiasm and involvement of farmers in PGR management and use to influence these trends. The CBDC programme may need to further strengthen or place special efforts on several of its current activities to meet these challenges, especially in the areas of awareness raising, empowering farmers, capacity building, and enhancement of seed, marketing, promoting diversity and policy (advocacy).

## **B. Latin America**

The Latin American CBDC program is strongly agro-ecology oriented in all four partner nations--Colombia,

Chile, Brazil and Peru. The projects in this region focus both on crop plants, which include indigenous vegetables, medicinal plants and major food crops, and on semi-wild and under-utilized plants as well as wild plant species of potential value, which are conserved, developed and utilized by existing practices and methods of rural/ farm communities. Focusing on long established traditional systems of farming built around the life styles and livelihoods of communities, the regional CBDC approach actively incorporates and addresses concepts of ecosystems; related cultural, socio-economic and livelihood interactions, and the implications of management and use of resources harbored by these ecosystems. At the same time, food crops like potato, beans, quinoa, arracacia, maize etc. receive appropriate focus.

Among the various transversal lines, the NDSDB component is uniquely strong within the LA CBDC programme. Co-ordinated by CET SUR, all four national programmes have undertaken to include wild and semi-domesticated plants or ecosystems as a major concern of their work. The major areas of activities include baseline study, protection and restoration of species and habitats, sustainable use of biodiversity, training and awareness creating, impact monitoring, policy on conservation, and promoting NDSDB. Each project has developed its own priorities and approaches to implementing the various activities related to this T-line.

In Peru, farm families/communities conserve wild plants through effective use i.e. domestic as well as marketing of processed material. A farmer to farmer (campesino to campesino) training approach is employed to equip the community members with knowledge about the wider utility of the different wild plants --medicinal, food/fodder, household uses (energy/repellents), indicators, etc--utilizing existing community specialist knowledge. (Unfortunately neither evaluator was able to meet directly with a representative from this programme, so our information comes from document review and conversations with colleagues from the other three national projects.)

In Brazil, the CBDC Project (AS-PTA) follows an ecosystem approach and operates through an association of ecological farmers throughout large areas. In the state of Paraná, this includes work to restore the native forest cover (Araucaria Forest) in a cooperative effort to process and market certified community-produced organic products like the "yerba mate" and medicinal plants, which benefits the nearby districts. The Brazilian project also supports a sophisticated farmer-led PPB program in maize that relies on strong ties and cooperation with local university specialists and



laboratory facilities, and supportive extension agents. Growing seed distribution networks and CSB systems through seed and food fairs, tasting and judging events, etc. are supported and co-promoted through strong linkages with local, state and national religious institutions and multiple political parties to reach far beyond what CBDC-supported staff would be able to accomplish alone. The Brazil project attempts to integrate all members and generations of farm families across-generations, and has some influence in the development of curricula and methods used in the regional education program for rural youth.

The Chilean CBDC project implemented by CET SUR works toward restoring/rehabilitating biodiversity within an ecosystem or territory at large and utilization of various plants within it. The indigenous knowledge available with the traditional specialists and seed custodians is seen as the most adequate and suitable base for guiding the restoration of symbolic and ecological territories, as well as, the strategies on the development and use of wild / semi-cultivated plant materials. This programme works hard to value and create public appreciation for traditional specialists among urban and non-farming populations as well as conventionally-trained specialists, and is characterized by a high degree of inter-cultural exchange, including a strong gender analysis.

The CBDC - Colombia project focuses on the study and use of non-cultivated biodiversity conducted through a participatory work involving the University of Nauns and rural communities. The project has been successfully documenting through this approach medicinal plants, food / fodder plants and lumber, and the utility (economic and cultural) and management of these resources by rural communities in the target areas. The cultural basis of biodiversity management and utilization is also very strong within the Colombian programme, which benefits greatly from its association with IMCA, the implementing partner institution, which has worked for many decades in the region and an extensive supporting infrastructure. In the current volatile political situation and increasing violence and militarization, this strong and community-trusted base is especially important.

Put together, the LA CBDC work along this T-line is attuned to the social, cultural and economic background of the various communities that the project is working with. There are serious challenges--from political to policy and economic draw backs, even tragic incidences such as those that occurred within the Colombian community--that represent major threats to sustenance of work in this area. Despite these pressures, the efforts of the communities, the national CBDC coordinators and the various partner groups continue to function with growing influence within the

region, and are very interested in increasing their links and sharing out puts and concepts with CBDC projects in Africa and SEAsia.

The PPB/PVS work of the LA CBDC partners focuses on cereals (mainly maize) and various beans and root and tuber crops. The various projects work very closely with farm communities whose knowledge and practices provide the basis for conducting the various activities of this T-Line.

The Colombian PPB/PVS work focuses on maize, arracacia (*Arracacia xanthorrhiza*) and frijol (*Phaseolus vulgaris*). The activities are carried out on-farm with mixed cultivation, involving coffee (the dominant crop), which is produced in mixture with these crops and fruit trees. Community knowledge is key, combined in the project with scientific methods to carry out T-Line activities on-farm in close collaboration with farm families in various communities in the region<sup>10</sup>. The work is farmer and indigenous-community-led, whilst IMCA together with collaborating partner NGOs and a local university participate in conducting relevant research. We found the PPB work on maize quite interesting in that two major local maize varieties (white and yellow types) are, in the farmers' language, married (crossed) to interchange / incorporate useful traits between the two -- to introduce early maturity in one and to revitalize the other.

In Peru the focus crop is potato where farmers have established criteria for local crop improvement / selection which they themselves carry out on the basis of traditional knowledge of varietal selection and breeding. The main areas these farmers work include increased productivity (yield), earliness and quality (including selection of types with desirable traits for processing), all traditionally produced using organic fertilizers or without external inputs like chemical fertilizers/pesticides and other chemical products. The materials utilized for the PPB/PVS work include potato varieties from local markets that farm families collaborating with the project have identified, varieties made available through exchange and collecting within a network of farms, cross bred entries and seed provided by cooperating institutions. Farmer to farmer training is key to implementing the various activities related to this T-Line.

The Chile CBDC project places a lot of effort to rescue, conserve and develop quinoa (*Chenopodium* spp.), an

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<sup>10</sup> PPB/PVS work on frijol is conducted on IMCA farm, where also research on the influence of moon phases on arracacha production is conducted.

indigenous plant widely grown during the Inca Civilization in the past which faced threats of extinction over the years. At the same time, crops like beans, potato and cereals are included, especially in the area of increasing diversity and some improvement work (PPB/PVS related) that the project implements in collaboration with farmers trained to do team work.

As mentioned, the Brazilian PPB/PVS activities are quite elaborate, especially where farm communities collaborating with AS PTA plan and implement their own varietal improvement and selection, employing their own methods with impressive results. With maize for example the farmers grow a wide range of traditional varieties, and identify the best types and test those on their farms and in the laboratory (e.g. testing for quality and various agronomic characteristics) at a collaborating University. Various beans and cassava are also included in the PVS work, with seed banks like those NGOs have built save seeds and provide material for such activities.

In general, the PPB/PVS work of the LA CBDC Projects is oriented toward selecting individual types (similar to conventional mass selection) and/or varieties based on criteria that the farm communities have established to meet various requirements unique to each farming conditions and marketing within communities. Farmers also make crossings that they select from segregating populations, in many cases with traditional varieties collected or exchanged among communities farming in different areas or ecological niches. This may allow new and useful combinations to occur which (as in the CBDC-Colombia case) they capitalize on to promote their varieties. In this context, we suggest that the CBDC projects consider placing efforts to do research on and document the available germplasm resource base and the amount and kind of variability inherent in such material and to exchange germplasm/seed within a wider network (involving if possible also genebanks, plant breeding institutions, etc) and areas covering diverse agro-ecological niches. This will likely promote a more effective and sound basis for further strengthening the PPB work.

On the Seed Supply Systems (SSS T-Line) aspect, the various projects employ different approaches toward ensuring a sustained supply of planting material at the community level. In the Colombian CBDC Project farmers grow their crops twice a year and the communities manage their own seed or have access to it through Seed Keepers Groups and, as reported to us, see no particular need for centralized community seed banks as such. In Chile the Trakintus or exchange systems represent a key strategy for a decentralized supply of seed, controlled and implemented through campesino organizations. The CBDC project has played a key role in reactivating and promoting this system

within a wider network of stake holders involving various institutions and rural development agencies. In Brazil, specialized groups/communities multiply traditional varieties of various crops like maize, beans, potato and rice which they collect or obtain / exchange through Seed Fairs, and seed banks maintain those along with materials made available through PPB/PVS for communities. In Peru farm families (conservationists/ custodians) cooperate with the Project in sustaining seed supply or in facilitating exchange of seed.

Work on Gender T-line is receiving a growing attention with in the LA CBDC projects especially in the Chili project where women participate as conservation specialists, or as breeders and custodians of biodiversity. We found the integration of gender in this project which also works to develop gender analysis tools and methods particularly impressive and an exemplary CBDC intervention, since women are key players in agro-biodiversity management and use, common to a degree across the LA projects whose activities are generally agro-ecologically oriented. Much of the work to document gender roles and issues in this area has yet to materialize to promote gender-defined roles and relationship within the various projects in the region. We believe sharing the available information and experience among the partners nations is crucial, in this respect.

The progress on the Policy T-line is quite impressive and its activities well integrated within the various CBDC national programmes. The work of the ETC Group which coordinates this T-Line has been very instrumental in equipping the LA CBDC (and all CBDC partners) with information critical to understanding the various trends and phenomena that affect biodiversity conservation, development and use in this and other regions of the world.

The work of the partner nations in this area is increasingly focused, and in most cases undertaken though networks involving partner groups working to protect community rights on PGR concerns, or in alliances with various relevant social movements to create awareness and carry out advocacy. Examples of major areas of interventions of the LA CBDC programmes include food sovereignty (Colombia), territorial conflicts related to ecosystems / territorial restoration (Chile and Colombia), protection / promoting agro-ecology based agriculture (Brazil) and new emerging state policy with potential threat to community based agricultural development (Peru).

Mainstreaming the CBDC approach in the South American programme takes different forms and levels of

operation with impressive progress of work both at the national level, and collectively as a region. In general, community seed banks distribute seed and pertinent information obtained through seed development or PGR use obtained through research and mainstreams those across local communities, nationally and regionally by way of seminars and international meetings. Partner nations commonly employ various brochures, video films, Fairs and public media like radio broad cast to disseminate information or create awareness on issues related to their activities. The LA RCU has played an active part in promoting CBDC concepts and approaches / regional perspectives, including creation of a documentary film and systematic organizing of regional meetings and seminars.

### C. Africa

The CBDC Africa Programme operates in four countries: Zimbabwe in Southern Africa and Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso and Mali in the Western Africa Region.<sup>11</sup> The projects are located in communal farming areas where farmers till the land and raise livestock for subsistence and marketing. The environmental conditions which farmers in the various regions have to contend with are complex, risky and diverse, often suffering from recurrent drought and other stresses. Consequently the farming systems that have evolved in these areas are diverse, based largely on social relations and intra-community inter-actions. The seeds needs of households are correspondingly diverse. The traditional seeds are largely represented by sorghum, pear millet, (local maize), finger millet, bambara nut, ground nut, cowpea and various vegetables and roots crops; wild plants maintained for local uses are also included. CBDC works closely with communal farmers living in the marginal areas who have been left out of most mainstream agricultural research and development programs. Similarly, seeds provided through most seed enterprises are those developed mainly for broad adaptation elsewhere in other sectors, and are often poorly adapted to the set of environment conditions prevailing on the peasant farms.

Nevertheless, farmers within the communal sector keep struggling to sustain their livelihoods, cultivating a range of different crops in sequence or through intercropping. This is an important feature in the local farming systems, and has provided opportunities for CBDC to assist resource poor farmers both to optimize the use of available resources, and to alleviate poverty arising from losses of resources that the communal and small scale farming sector in Africa has traditionally managed to secure their food and livelihood. CBDC Africa's strategy was designed to enable these communities to become more sustainable and productive.

<sup>11</sup> BDI- Ethiopia and CIKSAP-Kenya left the programme in Phase I and Mali joined in during phase II.

Developing ecologically and culturally based agricultural practices that raise land productivity while conserving and restoring the resource base is considered critical to improve the quality of life of farmers of the target areas in the region.

Within this context, CBDC partners have identified and acted upon important opportunities for interventions, especially through farmers' seed promotion strategies. These strategies are strengthened and informed by the experience of the African national partners' and projects' prior involvement in community based agricultural development in Southern Africa---CTDT in Zimbabwe, CBAN in Sierra Leone, INERA in Burkina Faso and USC-SoS in Mali.

The various T-lines which run through the CBDC project structure provide the basis for a not yet fully realized regional network of cooperative activities, and are implemented by each project with varying emphasis in selected areas.

Work on SSS and PPB/PVS T-lines represent the major focus within the CBDC-Africa programme, and all partners have undertaken work in these areas with great enthusiasm following strategies and approaches that respond to prevailing problems and circumstances.

In Zimbabwe, CTDT operations in two Districts – Tsholotsho and Umba Maiamba Pfungwe (UWP) –have done a commendable job of promoting local seed supply systems for such strategic food crops as sorghum and millets and drought tolerant crops including cow peas, beans ground nuts, bambara nuts. The projects in these districts involve 800 farmers. Farm communities produce their own choice of quality seed through a Farmer Capacity Building Program, which also trains farmers in seed production and management. Much of this work is also facilitated by the village based networks established in Tsholotsho and UWP Districts, each represented by committee member that co-ordinate seed trading and other activities related to seed exchange, marketing and in identifying / assessing community needs. The project also benefits from CTDT's close working relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture, CBOs and NGOs, and the national genebank, which has strong links to the CBDC project staff.

The PPB activity focuses mainly on sorghum and pearl millet, and is limited to selecting from materials (populations) provided by the Project. With respect to maize, farmers carry out PVS on materials (OPVs) provided by CIMMYT. In the various project areas some 200 farmers are producing seed (e.g. Maize) for a

national company (SEEDCO-Seed Company of Zimbabwe) in addition to their own seed, following seed certification standards that the CBDC Project has trained lead farmers to meet and negotiated with the company on the farmers' behalf. Farmers we met and spoke with about this arrangement were enthusiastic about it, and we found the approach quite innovative and commendable, especially for its potential to secure sustained income for farmers as they continue promoting and eventually improving their own seed, with increased incentives to grow more diversified crops.

In Sierra Leone the SSS work is mainly on rice, which for the most part is implemented by CBAN in close collaboration with the Rice Research Station at Rokupa. The CBAN community seed supply program is linked to the Newton based Rice Research Station where most of the PPB / PVS activities are carried out in nurseries; and the PPB aspect is actually scientist led. The nurseries provide the materials for farmer-led PVS activity involving some 450 farmers. The CBDC-S.L programme has done a credible job of linking the NGO-based farmer network with community leaders and national, regional (e.g. WARDA) and international agencies (e.g. CARE-International), which have been instrumental in promoting seed development, conservation and sustained seed supplies. This has no doubt contributed to the sustenance / recovery of germplasm resources over the past decade of war in the country, and to the rehabilitation of infrastructures that still suffer major damages from this period. Community seed banks (in Uмба) re-established after the war also maintain several crop types other than rice, including indigenous and introduced vegetables, and maintain perennials in the field that farmers have access to for producing crops, alternating production between these two totally different environments. A striking and quite interesting feature of the seed supply system in this project is that farmers plant up-land rice on-farm during the rainy season and switch to the swamp gardens during the dry season, which allows year round growing of material and PVS under highly varied conditions.

In Mali, the CBDC Project has developed SSS work including a seed bank that plays a key role in providing locally adapted seed of various cereals like sorghum and millets as well as vegetables and root crops (partly maintained in the field). It also provides the material for PPB/PVS activities. Based at Douentza, the project operates through partnerships with local NGOs involved in community activities on agro-biodiversity, environment and food security. Articulation with the on-going Seeds of Survival (SoS) Programme of USC-Canada has benefited the CBDC project in Mali, especially pertaining to seed supply and the PPB/PVS work, which encompasses 54 villages involving 11,000 farmers.

In Burkina Faso, the CBDC Project has an active programme of SSS operating at numerous distinct sites, with local communities that grow and market traditional cereals like sorghum and pearl millets, ground nuts, cowpeas and other crops, including gomba (*Abelmoschus esculentus*) and okra. Wild plants also are grown by these communities for local uses as food and for medical purposes. Scientist-led PPB/PVS activities are conducted at community levels, and training of farmers is provided by the national research team. Other collaborating partners include the University of Ouagadougou, the Ministry of Agriculture, ASNATO (a farmers' organization) and one NGO (FNGN).

The Policy T-line appears to take different forms and levels of involvement among partners in the region depending on the prevailing circumstances and policy environment in which the projects are operating. In places like Sierra Leone, community activities are in fact encouraged by government authorities who support CBAN's farmer based network. Similarly, in Burkina Faso the national research programme is promoting and organizing communities to produce and market their own seeds, and their seed development activities allow farmers to benefit from comparative trials observations involving both traditional and modern varieties (this is also the case with rice in Sierra Leone). In Mali the community activities find a comparatively modest support, as the country continues to place greater emphasis on rice for export, but the programme operates well through partner NGOs and some links with the formal sector through various government development programme.

At the same time governments in these and other regions of sub-Saharan Africa are increasingly reshaping policies in response to international trade pressures, with potentially disastrous implications for locally controlled rights and food security. This seriously affects the capacity of local communities, and the groups working with them, to continue building sustainable livelihood systems based on biodiversity. Much of the work of West African partners on the policy T-line is, therefore, oriented toward awareness creating on these issues among the farm communities.

In the Southern Africa sub-region, agricultural policy appears to actively discourage farmers' local plant genetic resource management and use of local landraces. This takes a number of different forms, including policies (subsidizing prices of modern varieties of seed and corresponding inputs), credit policies (tying loans to purchase of modern varieties), extension service promoting use of modern varieties, and a general belief

among key government authorities that local traditions are backward and conservative.

Despite the negative effects of such policies and erosion of traditional and customary systems of natural resources, management skills are still abundant within local communities in Southern Africa. There is ample evidence, which CTDT has documented for Zimbabwe, that resources can be sustainably managed and used where indigenous knowledge systems and practices still exist. To this end, the Zimbabwe CBDC project has and continues to play a key role in influencing national laws that in the past prohibited small-scale farmers from certifying and selling their seed. CTDT has also been active in advocacy at national and regional levels (e.g. on land use, PGR issues, etc) and internationally through debates, workshops and various relevant publications in areas related to community rights, the African Model Law (for the protection of the rights of local communities, farmers, breeders and regulation of access to biological resources), CBD and other policy contexts.

Work on Gender is for the most part limited to studies related to different roles in PGR conservation and development, impacts of the different roles and empowerment of women. In the Mali / Burkina Faso CBDC project, however, this T-line has received a greater focus, and involves several communities to promote the role of women in biodiversity conservation and development. CBDC-Mali has also established broad base collaborative links in this area with neighboring countries (e.g. NGOs in Burkina Faso and Senegal). The Mali project has been working with recognizable success to integrate gender issues in to the management, enhancement and effective use of national resources.

Activities related to NDSDB are generally limited to studies to document and/or conserve neglected crops (CBDC-Mali), wild plant species maintained by farm communities for local uses as food or for medicinal purposes and, in some places, forest gardens are maintained by communities (e.g. CBDC - Mali). The CBDC - Burkina Faso project is undertaking to document the role of local markets in the conservation and utilization of semi-cultivated/non-cultivated plant species, as well as the integration of such material into farmers cropping strategies.

In the area of mainstreaming, CBDC partners have generally focused on publications and workshops conducted mostly within each region involving various stakeholders on CBDC approaches and PGR issues. Information exchange between African Sub-regions and other regions is relatively modest, due mainly to logistical and resource constraints and apparent lack of clearly defined commitments and prioritization for this T-Line.

Networking within each project is a major strength of the programme; similarly the establishing of links with a broad base stakeholders has played a key role in facilitating collaborative work. Staffing is a major limitation with the CBDC-programme, but the projects are also bestowed with high level expertise at project management and/or scientific leadership levels. This leadership is complemented by support systems provided by each of the implementing institutions that already have established skills and experience with community based activities, and in some cases infrastructures that existed before the CBDC programme came into being.

The various groups (e.g. universities, research centers, etc) collaborating with the CBDC programme also contribute in the area of scientific research. Case studies such as those taking place in the various projects—e.g. seed viability study for the CSBs at CTDT, scientific study on indigenous seed (in collaboration with CGN) in Sierra Leone, ethno-botanical studies in Burkina Faso etc—are important initiatives that we believe are crucial to advance CBDC's work on the scientific front.

The work on SSS is among most impressive components of the CBDC program in Africa. The partner nations have each taken important measures to promote sustainable seed supply systems building on existing community initiatives. We also noted that there are several gaps in the available knowledge base regarding the traditional seed—e.g. the genetic and social dynamics of farmers varieties, quantitative assessments of the status of PGR, marketing, seed/PGR exchange, etc—and indigenous knowledge systems that are crucial to developing a viable seed supply system. There are also some cases of success in these regards, such as those observed during our field visit with the CTDT project in Zimbabwe, or mentioned in reports made available by the various projects. CTDT has in fact documented a substantial amount of information on issues related to community seed supply, and the status of traditional seed etc. based on surveys conducted in the past within the SADC Region.

The seed development work is basically confined to varietal selection (involving improved/introduced material, or varieties developed from promising lines/plants from segregating populations provided by the breeding programs<sup>12</sup>) compared to breeding (or enhancement) of material to promote local varieties to improve their competitiveness—e.g. raising yield while

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<sup>2</sup> As reported, the CTDT co-ordinator (as plant breeder) has been training and assisting farmers on various methods of breeding with sorghum, and is working to do the same with maize (i.e. develop composite varieties).

maintaining the various characters of adaptation (i.e. the adaptive gene complex in general) and other values inherent in such materials. We believe a slightly revised approach to the PPB exercise is crucial, in this respect, and would provide a more realistic, safe and sound basis for the PVS, especially where farmers compare improved or new, introduced varieties with the local or traditional types.

Finally, coordinating the African CBDC programme had been quite a challenge in the past due mainly to problems of communication (e.g. the war in Sierra Leone) and language barriers with regard to reporting. This is now improving, especially with the ARCU at CTD making special efforts to visit the projects periodically. There still is need for more interactive meetings and reporting, and the networking of collaborative links involving CBDC projects between the two sub-regions.

## **IX. Findings and recommendations related to development of CBDC as a global programme and network**

### **A. Fundraising/Resource Development**

The PCC correctly understands and is grateful for the strong commitment of the current donor group during its first decade as a crucial element in its development and achievements to date. As one PCC member put it, this support provided CBDC with “a protected space” that allowed it to grow with little financial uncertainty, and without having to convince others to support it before it could develop a track record of demonstrable results.

However CBDC is no longer a “start up” programme, and the ability to secure adequate funding obviously is crucial to the success and sustainability of any programme. We find CBDC’s fundraising and other resource generating capacity to be underdeveloped relative to its size and stage of development, a lack that could easily become a serious threat to the partners’ work (even if it is not now).

Exploration of this topic with the PCC indicated that serious efforts to secure additional support were made during the transition from the first to the second phase, but these were not successful and additional efforts were dropped after funding for the second phase was secured. Staff changes and turnover within the PCC during this time, and in some donor agencies, also disrupted continued focus on CBDC’s resource development capacities at this time.

The PCC now appears to recognize that it needs to secure additional resources beyond those provided by the original donors, and be prepared to replace the support of any current donors who may lessen or end their support for any reasons, including developments totally independent of

CBDC and beyond the control of partners or donors. While this recognition is important, fundraising as an ongoing activity within CBDC must receive higher priority in the remaining months of phase 2 and thereafter. Because fundraising is most successfully when approached as a responsibility shared by the CBDC partners and already committed donors, recommendations concerning this point are included in the section addressed to donors as well as these to CBDC.

1. The PCC should appoint a standing committee or similar body charged with re-initiating and coordinating fundraising efforts beyond its interactions with current donor agencies. The GCU and ACU should be part of this effort. This committee should report on its progress at every meeting of the PCC, and work as closely as possible with CBDC’s current donors, and other allies and contacts as appropriate to increase the pool of donors and types of resources available to the CBDC programme.
2. Soon after it is formed, this group should review CBDC’s past fundraising efforts, survey potential new sources and develop mechanisms to keep informed of and explore relevant new funding opportunities. Its work plan in the first year should include both discussion with a selected list of possible new donors from agencies already known to the partners and donors, and identification of potential new sources. Potential new sources to explore include donor agencies that support particular aspects of CBDC programmes, establishment of revolving funds to finance national and regional activities, and opportunities arising from relevant new and existing funds, including the recently established Global Conservation Trust.
3. The PCC needs to work with its members, the T-Line coordinators and the RCU to develop a list of priority activities and associated budgets to determine how much additional funding is needed to accomplish them (if any) in the remaining months of phase two, as well as funding required to carry out phase 3 activities. The PCC should set targets for increasing both the amount of its budget and the diversity of its funding sources in developing its third phase budget and programme.
4. While securing adequate operating funds will be the main focus, other forms of support can also be significant and should be considered. For example, in-kind donations of many kinds (e.g. equipment,

laboratory procedures, videography, airfare and other travel, graphic design and printing, fundraising consulting, etc.), as can sponsored staff, internship and training arrangements, and other forms of support.

## **B. Development of CBDC as a global network/New Alliances and Partnerships**

Mapping out CBDC's global and regional alliances links and alliances, and choosing where and how to deepen them based on it's global priorities, should be a key function of the PCC.

1. We recommend that this capacity be developed based on a review of existing global links. Creating and analyzing this baseline will help the PCC develop its network building and analyzing skills, including identifying and prioritizing opportunities to strengthen its links on a regular basis. Equally important, CBDC should examine important areas where it needs, but does not yet have allies, and develop strategies and plans to find and cultivate them.
2. The review should not be a burdensome project, and can be done in a single well-prepared and facilitated meeting organized for this purpose. This session should incorporate group brainstorming and mapping exercises, and small and large group discussion of prepared lists of contacts and allies organized by T-Lines and regions. Because discussions should be informed by the T-Line themes and objectives recommended earlier, the networking review should not happen until the T-Line process has taken place. We recommend that such a meeting be organized approximately a year from now, which also would allow the results to be used in developing CBDC's third phase plans and goals.
3. In preparation, we recommend the PCC develop a list of what it thinks of as "natural allies" among the networks and movements it works with. In developing the list, the PCC can either focus it's thinking in a key area (e.g., opposition to GURTs), or consider it alliances more broadly. In either case, it will be useful to note any time-sensitive opportunities or advantages of strengthening ties with particular networks or movements at this particular time. The list can include both hypothetical alliances and those based on existing collaboration, for example linkages that are well established in one region but not others. The following were mentioned at different points of the evaluation as possible candidates, and reflect some of the current thinking regarding alliance building within the programme:

- La Via Campesina; other peasant, farmworker and landless peoples organizations
- Coalitions developed around particular institutions and agreements, e.g. the CGIAR system, and initiatives of the UN system including the World Food Summit, the Convention on Biodiversity, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and associated Global Conservation Trust, etc.
- Allied sister networks and programmes, e.g. Seeds of Survival, GRAIN, Pesticide Action Network
- Networks working with the organic sector

4. As further preparation, we recommend each RCU survey its regional links and alliances, and identify existing or needed links with most potential to complement and advance regional, T-Line and global strategies. RCUs should discuss the results of their regional surveys both with the PCC and national programmes in their region, and develop their regional alliance building strategies according to the feedback they receive. The regional surveys and strategies also will provide important inputs to the global survey.

## **C. Regarding Northern partners**

The particular situation both of current and potential new Northern partners within CBDC was discussed with individual PCC members and the entire PCC. In earlier stages, CBDC structures differentiated between national programmes in the South, and technical and policy expertise providers based in Northern institutions. During the programme's first phase, this approach was discovered to be misguided and inaccurate, and was changed structurally and conceptually so CBDC could evolve in closer accordance with its principles and realities. Reinforcement of the programme's already strong farmer-orientation and Southern leadership were among the results of this process. While not always comfortable, this process was by all accounts authentic, necessary and respectful, and ultimately resulted in more grounded and secure leadership of CBDC by the PCC.

1. Because CBDC is rooted strongly in field work in the South, and since the T-Lines have not yet resulted in the integrated global framework they were intended to provide, the northern partners sometimes question the nature of their role and relation to the programme. We recommend periodic review of the role of Northern partners as part of the PCC's ongoing evaluation of CBDC structures, so that these questions are raised and settled in the context of the global programme.

2. Discussions of this topic also raised interesting questions about how and whether CBDC wishes to relate to cultivators dedicated to ensuring the continued existence of highly threatened agrobiodiversity in the North. (Organizations mentioned working in this area included Seed Savers Exchange and the Land Institute in the U.S., and the Dutch Institute of Organic Farming in Europe.) The PCC began a somewhat unexpected discussion of this topic in Harare, which we recommend be continued regardless of how it is ultimately decided. CBDC has always seen policy and mainstreaming activities in and directed toward the North as essential to its efforts; as a global programme, it should also articulate the basis on which it either includes, or does not include, PPB/PVS, SSS, and/or NDSDB strategies in the North as well.

#### **D. Linkages Between Formal and Informal Knowledge Systems/Institutions**

CBDC is a major contributor to the larger human project of understanding and managing genetic resources related to food and agriculture. Among other things, CBDC has generated and continues to expand an important body of experiences critical to this evolving knowledge base. These experiences necessarily involve analysis of and interactions between formal and informal knowledge systems, and it is our strong impression that the scope and content of CBDC's contributions to these efforts and interactions are under recognized and undervalued, certainly by those outside of CBDC circles, and even by some partners, donor agencies and stakeholders. Closer examination of some of the situations aggregated into the summary at the start of CBDC's 2002 Report of Activities reveals specific contributions in several important areas, including:

- Community based agrobiodiversity as a basis for sustainable livelihoods
- Community based agrobiodiversity management as an aspect of food security and food sovereignty
- The fundamental importance of indigenous and cultural knowledge and frameworks to agrobiodiversity conservation, utilization and improvement
- Gender and agrobiodiversity conservation, utilization and improvement
- Agrobiodiversity and drought and/or climate change
- Agrobiodiversity conservation in situations of war
- Agrobiodiversity in relation to local and regional markets and certification systems
- Community based agrobiodiversity management as a complement and back up to ex-situ conservation, and vice versa<sup>13</sup>

Preparing a synthesis or even a full list of all this work is beyond the scope of this evaluation. Instead we will mention selected cases of CBDC's role bridging formal and informal scientific systems and institutions as examples of such work that otherwise may go unnoted.

1. Based on individual experiences and strong convictions, CBDC's founders first hypothesized that community led processes and utilization would prove at least as effective as science-driven ex-situ conservation strategies. CBDC members now have a decade of experience testing, validating, revising and evolving these original ideas. They have also been theorizing the relation of this work to formal scientific institutions, developing the notion of a commitment to the wellbeing of farming communities as a necessary precondition to successful agrobiodiversity conservation, and considering how processes, methods and the new knowledge that results from them cannot be isolated from one each other. While this and other concepts proposed by CBDC have not been embraced by mainstream scientific establishments, the implications of these ideas for human knowledge related to agrobiodiversity are profound and have begun to influence new generations of practitioners and theorists.
2. In recent years, some CBDC national programmes have developed strongly working relationships with formal scientific institutions at the local and national level, including signed cooperative agreements in some cases. We are aware of examples of close collaboration with universities or national institutions in Vietnam and Brazil, Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone, the Netherlands and Norway. While not always smooth or easy, these efforts have enabled significant advances in the national programmes and resulted in significant beneficial impacts to stakeholders. These cooperative relationships deserve to be acknowledged as significant joint achievements of all parties involved, and studied as models for possible replication and/or adaptation.
3. CBDC members have contributed directly and indirectly to the scientific literature in biodiversity-related fields. Some contributions appear in peer-reviewed publications, e.g. extensive involvement in an issue of the journal *Euphytica* devoted exclusively to PPB (*Euphytica* vol. 122, 2001), and contributions by Searice to the Source Book on Agrobiodiversity Conservation now being prepared by CIP in collaboration with IPGRI, GTZ, IDRC

<sup>13</sup> The latter refers to a very interesting case involving the Sierra Leone national programme and CGN.



and Searice. A growing body of work has been published by programme partners themselves, including 28 papers published as CBDC Southeast Asia Programme Technical Reports, numerous training materials and conference proceedings, articles within organizational journals and newsletters, technical manuals and presentations at seminars and workshops.

4. CBDC has introduced new methodologies and adapted existing ones to the field. Both approaches yield results of great potential value to other efforts. Examples of the former include development of the “Dialogue of Knowledge Systems” (“Dialogo de Saberes”) concept as a basis for understanding interactions between formal and informal agrobiodiversity knowledge systems; and conceptual and methodological frameworks that situate NDSDB within community led management processes (both examples from Latin America). Modification of the Farmer Field School (FFS) model and methods, transforming them into vehicles for PPB/PVS training in Southeast Asia, provides a good example of the latter (FFS was originally developed to increase farmers’ awareness of field level ecological dynamics related to pest management). And of course, CBDC has been at the forefront of articulating and opposing threats to agrobiodiversity and farming communities from privatization and monopolization of genetic resources and access to them since the day it began.
5. Judging from such examples, the programme’s potential contributions to formal science in many areas seem difficult to overestimate. Nevertheless, it appears that CBDC approaches and findings are considered “niche” science by the formal institutions that are aware of them, and known primarily to programme participants, stakeholders, and a small group of specialists who track innovative developments in plant breeding, crop genetics and agrobiodiversity management. This evaluation did not test and cannot prove this impression, but we offer it as a qualitative finding. Likely reasons for this situation include the fact that CBDC’s work directly challenges conventional wisdom and established economic and political interests, that the programme’s work is geographically dispersed and incompletely documented, and that CBDC partners have invested comparatively little attention to presenting them as contributions through formal science channels.
6. We find the lack of awareness and influence of CBDC work within formal science institutions alarming. Just as selection criteria based on farmers preferences within breeding programs is essential to conserving
- and increasing agrobiodiversity, the findings and diversity of approaches to PPB/PVS, SSS, NDSDB and gender-informed analysis being developed within CBDC are essential to more adequate and comprehensive understanding the basis and dynamics of agrobiodiversity management. CBDC also illuminates the enormous value, as well as the limitations, of formal science to improving farmer understanding of and benefits from agrobiodiversity, especially in contexts where farmers efforts are the difference between agrobiodiversity flourishing, barely surviving, or going extinct.
7. Having said this, we also recognize what several PCC members and RCU Coordinators mentioned to us, i.e. that the linkages CBDC is making between formal and informal knowledge systems are not being forged for their own sake, but in service of the mission of CBDC. This is an important point, and it needs to be kept in sight by partners, stakeholders and donors. There is serious resistance within formal scientific systems and institutions to many new approaches, not only those promoted by CBDC, and it is not always possible to move forward in a collaborative manner. Different approaches are required and different things are possible when dealing with institutions and/or individuals that are committed and positively inclined, vs. neutral but open, vs. neutral but indifferent, vs. mildly hostile to CBDC aims or methods, vs. extremely hostile to CBDC aims or methods. Furthermore, CBDC partners have encountered specific situations where no agreement regarding cooperation could be reached due to a formal science institution’s unwillingness to guarantee it would not seek to patent or other forms of ownership over seed varieties and other products of CBDC programmes.<sup>14</sup> Not only did this make collaboration with these specific institutions impossible, since opposing such approaches is part of CBDC’s mission, partners are now directly contesting them on this point.
8. To summarize, some but not all causes of CBDC’s lack of recognition and visibility relative to the importance of their contributions are beyond the programme’s power to address. For those causes and factors that CBDC can address (including several mentioned above), we recommend the programme devote additional time and resources to considering how to address them as strategically and effectively as possible. (NB: other

<sup>14</sup> We are aware of specific instances in Brazil and Colombia; there may be others as well.

recommendations relevant to this section are incorporated within the T-Line discussions.)

## **E. Achieving greater recognition of CBDC as a global programme**

While concern over CBDC's lack of external profile and recognition is among the key concerns motivating this evaluation, it is also comparatively easy challenge to address. How this situation came to be is easy to understand: during the first phase, the partners made a political and strategic decision not to identify the work of CBDC publicly at the global level, and work practices developed accordingly. Long after the partners recognized this decision as out-dated and unhelpful, the practices developed while it was in effect continued on "auto-pilot," ensuring that the programme remained invisible to anyone not already aware of its work. Fortunately there are several simple steps the partners can take to improve this situation dramatically improve its visibility and recognition of its achievements, ranging from easy to more sophisticated strategies. We recommend starting with the following obvious, proven approaches to ensuring that CBDC becomes better known, and that its work is routinely identified as such by partners and others. (Additional findings and recommendation related to this topic can be found in the T-Line mainstreaming section and the discussion of alliances, partnerships and networking above, and in the recommendations to donors below and are not repeated here.)

1. Some national projects, RCUs and T-Line coordinators have taken initiative in this area and regularly identify their work as part of CBDC, which has helped improve CBDC visibility somewhat already.<sup>15</sup> To facilitate and expand this process throughout the programme, CBDC should develop a basic brochure or similar instrument that introduces and describes its aims, approaches, partners and accomplishments. This first brochure should not be elaborate or expensive, and some version of it should be designed to transmit easily electronically, and to reproduce well in photocopy form. It should be available at least in CBDC's four working languages (English, French, Spanish and Portuguese), and be available on the CBDC website and the websites of all partner groups as well as in printed form. Because it is such a basic tool, we strongly urge that CBDC re-direct existing resources or obtain new ones sufficient to produce such a brochure within six months.

2. Once the brochure is created, it is crucial that CBDC partners develop the habit of using it in their ongoing CBDC work, and in the context of other programs and their general organizational outreach and promotion as appropriate.
3. Beyond the brochure, the PCC should work with the T-Line coordinators and RCUs to formalize expectations, guidelines and/or protocols regarding how partners identify their CBDC work (e.g. in printed materials, videos, websites, workshops, interviews and media exposures, coalition work, etc.) and themselves as partners in CBDC more generally. It will be helpful in this regard to develop both a short and longer version of a standard description of CBDC for use by the partners, so that partners don't have to keep re-inventing one, and so that all share and present a similar basic description of the CBDC programme. These short and long descriptions should be translated into all CBDC working languages and easily accessible to all partners on the Internet, most likely via the CBDC platform.
4. We recommend that the PCC consider the utility of developing a logo for the CBDC programme. From initial responses to this suggestion during the evaluation process (which was not discussed in depth), we sense that some partners question the need or priority of this, and we do not insist on it as a necessary step (in contrast to the brochure, for example). Rather, we think it would be wise to explore it as an option, and base any decision on whether to have or not have a logo on joint evaluation of the potential advantages, disadvantages and uses of a logo.

## **X. Recommendations to Donor Agencies**

A. The importance of the long-term support provided by CBDC's donors, in some cases since the programme began, became increasingly clear over the course of the evaluation. Being able to count on this support allowed CBDC partners to concentrate almost exclusively on developing their programs, testing their ideas and building an impressive track record without constantly diverting time and energy to piece together next year's budget. At the February PCC meeting, PCC members acknowledged just how critical this core support has been to establishing the strong partnerships and relationships with communities that it considers its greatest strengths. There is also recognition that the

<sup>15</sup> Examples of this include SE Asia monographs, the Latin America video "Jardín de tus Manos", and flyers advertising the CBDC-organized workshop at the January 2003 World Social Forum.

donors have helped the programme to identify and address some of its weaknesses. While both donor representatives and PCC members are clear there have been major differences and disappointments along the way, on balance we see strong evidence that the collaboration between CBDC donors and partners has been productive, mission-driven and very successful. Our recommendations to the donor agencies are made in this context.

B. We strongly recommend continued funding of the CBDC programmes at agreed upon levels at least until the end of its second phase. Beyond the second phase, each agency faces a different internal situation, but to the extent possible, we also recommend extending support into the third phase. Providing financial continuity and networking assistance/introduction to CBDC partners as they grow their donor base is extremely important to make the transition to a new and more diverse funding base go as smoothly as possible, with as little loss to momentum in programme activities and impacts as feasible. Since the Oslo meeting, the donors have been sharing information on the possibilities for continued funding more systematically and in greater detail with each other and with the PCC; we recommend that this dialog continue.

C. If and as possible, making additional funding available to targeted priority areas and activities is also recommended. In a number of cases, small amounts of additional funding would leverage significant additional results. These areas include:

1. Selected T-Line strategy development and implementation.
2. Global and regional policy work (includes strategy development; commissioned research, e.g. economic, legal and/or market studies; advocacy activity including development of policy relevant presentations).
3. Global and regional integration, training and capacity building, including strategy and planning meetings bringing partners from different regions together for skill sharing and other work on time sensitive topics.
4. Creation of programme-wide promotional material.

D. It is important and strategic that CBDC's donors recognize their funding of the CBDC programme as an extraordinarily cost effective and well-leveraged investment in development and social change. This is important not just to credit the donors have played in CBDC's growth and accomplishments, but also to help interest potential new funders in supporting the programme, and to give visibility to this rare example of long-term funding as a strategy for building networks, movements and social change capacity more broadly. (NB, analysis of the impacts and dynamics of funding global networks are at an early stage, and examining "the CBDC experience" from that perspective

would be very useful to quantify how resources have been matched and leveraged, and explore the advantages of longer compared to shorter-term support more systematically.)

E. Staff turnover, leadership changes, agency restructuring and new challenges all effect can effect what kind of support that donor agencies can provide and seek from each other as well as to CBDC partners. The meeting in Oslo in early 2002 was an important breakthrough for improving coordination among CBDC's supporters and increasing direct communications between the donors and PCC members. We urge the donors to maintain their goal of meeting at least annually, and continue coordinating field visit schedules and maximizing information exchange among themselves and with CBDC partners.

F. Related to this point, we recommend that the programme officers who liaise with CBDC invest time over the next year improving and increasing as needed their communications and collaboration with the PCC and other CBDC actors/elements related to:

1. Timely communication of any questions or concerns regarding CBDC's programme or administrative functions. (Based on what we have seen, concerns discussed with the PCC are likely to be addressed in a useful and constructive fashion over time, if not instantaneously.)
2. Information sharing re: developments of relevance to CBDC global and regional programs and T-Lines
3. Information sharing re: developments within donor agencies that are relevant to CBDC's mission and objectives
4. Exploring and offering ways of assisting CBDC to raise its visibility and profile and mainstream CBDC objectives, results, methods, principles, etc.

G. We urge the donor agencies to work with the PCC to identify and cultivate potential new funding sources for CBDC programs and activities. Successful fundraising is (among other things) an exercise in networking and developing partnerships based on mutual goals and interests. Creativity, authenticity and a strong track record of accomplishments, including in terms of successful funding strategies, are invaluable in this task. For donors to work openly with CBDC representatives to generate new resources sends a powerful message about the agency's (and the individual programme officer's) assessment of the value of the programme. And the more creativity and contacts that can be applied to the job, the better the chances of success.

H. Although a great deal of very exciting work is being done in Africa, linkages among national programmes and T-line activities within Africa, and between African national programmes and activities and other regions were relatively weaker than those in and between other regions. This decreases CBDC's global impacts, and also reduces African partner's benefits from participating in the global programme. For donors that target their support regionally, like the Development Fund, this could be an interesting opportunity to support activities in Africa by supporting their collaboration and integration within the global programme. We recommend discussion of this point with the African RCU, national programme coordinators and the PCC to explore if a focus on particular T-Line activities could help integrate African partners more comprehensively within the global programme, and raise awareness of African experiences, issues and successes more adequately throughout the global programme.

## **XI. Chronology and reflections on the evaluation process**

Below is a chronological list of the major steps taken in the process of carrying out this evaluation, followed by some brief reflections on the experience:

A. Donors and PCC agree upon the terms of reference and composition of the evaluation team in the second half of 2002.

B. Evaluators sign TOR and start review of Phase two proposals, budgets and background documents in late 2002.

C. Evaluators travel to Holland for January 13 and 14, 2003 meetings with the donors (represented by the Biodiversity Fund and the Development Fund); meetings and interviews with several members of the PCC; and initial discussions with each other to develop joint approaches, questions and interview guides.

D. Additional document/material collection and review.

E. Melaku Worede travels from Holland to Vietnam for field visits, interviews with key CBDC partners, respondents and stakeholder, and extended discussions with Asia Regional Coordinator Mr. Paul Borja and Vietnam National Project Coordinator Dr. Huynh Quang Tin.

F. Additional document/material collection and review.

G. Monica Moore travels to Porto Alegre, Brazil in late January to interview Latin American CBDC partners and stakeholders attending the General Assembly of Via

Campesina (January 21-22) and the World Social Forum from January 23-25, observe all-day seminar organized by CBDC partners at the World Social Forum, January 25, 2003. Following the seminar, she and Latin America Regional Coordinator Sr. Luis Eugenio Cifuentes and Brazil National Project Coordinator Sr. Jose Maria Tardín travel to several locations in the state of Paraná for field visits, additional interviews, a home stay and extended discussions with multiple project stakeholders and local political/institutional collaborators and supporters on January 26-28.

H. Additional document/material collection and review.

I. Both evaluators travel to Zimbabwe early February for field visits and interviews with national programme partners, stakeholders, local political/institutional collaborators and supporters on February 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Evaluators also meet for extended interviews and discussions with African Regional Coordinator Dr. Joe Mushonga, CBDC founding member Mr. Andrew Mushita, and National Project Coordinators for Mali, Mr. Mambi Fofana, and for Burkina Faso, Dr. Didier Balma, on February 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.

J. Evaluators finalize report outline, discuss and prepare preliminary findings and recommendations in Zimbabwe, February 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>.

K. Evaluators present and discuss their preliminary findings and recommendations in a debriefing session with the PCC members and African National Project Coordinators in Harare, February 12-13.

L. Additional document/material collection and review.

M. Monica Moore presents and discusses evaluator's preliminary findings and recommendations with donors from in a debriefing session in The Hague, Holland on February 15, 2003.

N. Additional telephone interviews with key partners and stakeholders, late February 2003.

O. Final document/material collection and review.

P. Incorporation of comments from the two debriefing sessions, final interviews and material reviews into report.

Q. Writing, editing and preparation of attachments. March 2003.

R. Submission of the evaluation report, April 2003.

Evaluating CBDC in its current phase was a fascinating experience. Both of us experienced the excitement – and occasional discomfort – associated with steep learning curves and deep engagement in complex issues. We were pleased when some PCC members and national programme coordinators told us they shared this excitement (and occasional discomfort), and told us that the reflections, information exchange and networking that took place during the evaluation would likely have positive spillover effects beyond the CBDC as well. We also felt our work was aided by our quite different but complementary disciplinary backgrounds and professional experiences.

Any evaluation of CBDC is going to be challenging, because so much relevant information about how it works and what it has accomplished or made possible is not recorded or easily discoverable, including examples that might contradict some report findings. CBDC has multiple ambitious goals and complex structure, relies heavily on formal and informal expertise and encompasses multiple kinds of activities in highly diverse regions and ecological, cultural and political settings around the world. All this means that no one person or group within or outside of CBDC has or can have a complete picture of it. This was brought home to us constantly during the evaluation as almost every single interview and interaction we had in the course of conducting the evaluation unearthed important information that changed our understanding of what CBDC is and does, up to and including the final phone interviews. Because we could not visit or interview many representatives and stakeholders from all national projects, we can only assume that important information and perspectives are missing from this report.

Furthermore, due to CBDC's wide geographic and language spread, varied linkages with other programs and networks, use of many methods and overall scarcity of funding, some barriers to compiling data needed to understand the programme cannot be surmounted. Evaluators, donors and CBDC partners alike need to understand that what they are see when they look at CBDC is the tip of an iceberg, and that new knowledge may change their judgments regarding the programme at any point in the process.

This should not discourage future evaluators, partners or donors, however. CBDC is a very unusual programme, and few models or precedents exist for reviewing it, so to some extent evaluators are working in uncharted territory. In other words, like CBDC itself, understanding and evaluating CBDC should be recognized as a dynamic process that continues after the final evaluation report is submitted and filed. That is why we have stressed the critical importance of ongoing evaluation and internal and external feedback throughout this report, and urge all partners and donors to collaborate in this task.

Finally, we wish to express our appreciation for the contributions of everyone involved in the evaluation process, and especially of the evaluation coordinators, organizers and those who traveled with and facilitated our work so cheerfully and competently.

## **XII. List of Attachments**

- A. List of documents and materials reviewed by evaluators
- B. List of individuals interviewed and contacted by evaluators
- C. Selected documents collected during field visits
- D. Flyer for the all-day seminar organized by CBDC partners and attended by evaluator at the World Social Forum, Porto Alegre, Brazil, January 25, 2003
- E. Diagram developed by evaluation team: Schematic Interpretation of Interrelationships Among CBDC Transversal Lines
- F. Evaluator notes from 2/12/03 PCC brainstorming session listing components of a comprehensive community-based seed supply system complex.
- G. List of Acronyms used